

ENSURING FAIRNESS AND EQUALITY IN COLLEGE ADMISSIONS

2023



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1	Overview
2	Approach 1: Rethink the Way Applications are Evaluated.
3	Approach 2: Level the playing field for equal access to financial aid.
4	Approach 3: Ensure equity for minority applicants.
5	Summary & Analysis
6	Works Cited

OVERVIEW

GPA, SAT scores, ACT scores, and extracurricular activities are some of the factors weighed by a college when deciding to offer a student admission (or not). Aspiring college students spend countless hours perfecting their applications in hopes of earning the opportunity of post-secondary education – an education that wins public approval and is reputed to bring a lifetime of financial prosperity.

However, as online applications like the Common App are becoming more popular, the number of college applicants is rising. Having exceptional quantitative records is no longer sufficient to guarantee a student is admitted into selective institutions. Colleges are looking beyond the classroom to evaluate applicants. They use supplemental essays, letters of recommendation, and extracurricular involvement to understand students as a whole person. This puts additional stress on students to find unique ways to stand out amongst the growing pool of applicants, and adds a burden to college admissions officers, who must identify students that best match the values of their school.

The current college admissions system is overbearing for students and colleges alike. It perpetuates a cycle of exclusivity and creates barriers to higher education for marginalized communities.

On one hand, when colleges receive more applications, they benefit from higher popularity rankings and build a reputation of selectivity by only accepting a certain number of students. This allows schools to cultivate a culture that adheres to certain values, whether it's being named a world-class research institution, like the Ivy Leagues, or dominating division I athletics, like Big Ten and SEC schools.

Harvard boasts an acceptance rate of 4% to preserve its prestigious reputation, while other schools focus on offering education to as many students as possible. The Pennsylvania State University, for example, admits 92% of its applicants (see Fig. 1) ("List of College Acceptance Rates."). However, even schools with high acceptance rates, like Penn State, cannot admit every applicant. Some students, disproportionately those of minority and underprivileged backgrounds, are left without access to higher education.

SCHOOL	ACCEPTANCE RATE
Harvard University	4%
Yale University	5%
Pennsylvania State University	92%
University of Utah	96%

Figure 1. The acceptance rate of various colleges, a key value in a college's reputation

In addition to the intimidating selectivity of many institutions, the financial commitment of applying to and attending college deters qualified applicants from pursuing post-secondary education. Before earning acceptance, application fees and the cost of standardized exams limit accessibility to the applicant pool. After being accepted (if a student is accepted), expenses compound exponentially with room and board, tuition, books, and other essential resources.

Beyond the increasingly selective admissions rates and burdensome monetary obligations faced by all college applicants, minorities and students with low socioeconomic backgrounds must overcome additional challenges during admissions.

Oftentimes, a lack of educational resources prevents disadvantaged students from becoming aware of scholarship and guidance opportunities. Additionally, underprivileged students may not have AP or IB course options to bolster their applications, like students from more privileged high schools do. As a result of their various disadvantages, less than 10% of people who grew up below the poverty line have any college education, and less than 5% graduate with a bachelor's degree or higher ("Poverty Rate in the United States ."). Ultimately, the failures and inconsistencies of the college admissions process limit the ability for students to get accepted to the right schools, and this poses a difficult question.

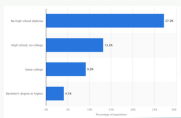


Figure 2. The rate of graduation from different levels of education for people who live under the poverty line.

How can we reform the college admissions process to ensure fairness and equality for students across the nation?

A reformed system needs to ensure that every student who desires an education, regardless of their background or heritage, has a fair chance at being admitted to and attending college. The right to education is a core value of the American Dream, upon which the United States public education system is built. Reshaping the college admissions system to fulfill its intended purpose poses challenging moral and social dilemmas: How can we ensure that the right students are getting accepted into the right schools? How can students that lack critical financial and educational means represent themselves to admissions committees? How can we efficiently allocate resources to inform high school students on the process of applying to and paying for higher education?

The goal of this issue brief is not to answer all of these questions, but rather pose three possible solutions and discuss the benefits and shortcomings of each. The following pages contain a detailed analysis of each approach, along with the necessary action steps they entail.

APPROACH 1: RETHINK THE WAY WE EVALUATE APPLICATIONS.

Overview

From 2002 to 2017, the volume of college applications doubled to a total of 10.2 million, with each student applying to an average of 6.8 schools (DeSilver). Though colleges enrolled 21.4% more students during that time period, it was not enough to keep pace with the soaring number of applications (DeSilver). As a result, colleges have recorded record-low admissions rates over the past two decades, creating an illusion of selectivity that pressures students to apply to more colleges (see Fig. 3).

With the growing popularity of online applications, test-optional policies, and rising GPAs, high school students are feeling less capable of demonstrating their college readiness among a larger and more competitive group of applicants. At the same time, colleges lack the necessary resources to provide fair consideration to the rising volume of students (DeSilver). The combined effect of rising application numbers and lack of funding perpetuates an unfair admissions cycle that continues to give rise to years of record-breaking admissions. Hence, the following solutions are proposed to mitigate the congestion of college applications and allow high school students a fair chance to represent themselves to colleges. The solutions also aim to ensure that colleges can allocate the necessary time and resources to each prospective student.

Change the format of applications to allow students to represent a more authentic version of themselves.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, many colleges implemented test-optional policies to increase accessibility to post-secondary education during the lockdown. Many universities found that removing standardized tests improved the diversity and equity on campuses, and nearly 80% of four-year colleges have reported that they will continue test-optional policies for students seeking Fall 2023 admissions (Nietzel; Lovell and Mallinson).

As standardized testing becomes obsolete, schools have been forced to rethink how they evaluate prospective students (see Fig. 4). A diminishing need for test scores suggests that the structure of college applications will change, and elements such as personal essays and letters of recommendation will begin to play a larger role.



Figure 3. Harvard University's increasing applicant pool and decreasing acceptance rates over the past two decades.

It is imperative that the reformed admission system allows students to present their “whole” selves to colleges. This approach suggests students submit portfolios with their applications, in which they highlight significant projects and extracurricular achievements (“Alternatives”). Through portfolio materials and essay responses, students can portray the best possible versions of themselves. They can also give admissions committees insight into their core values and unique qualities (“Alternatives”).

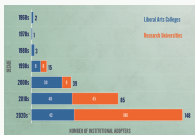
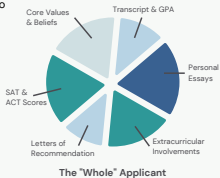


Figure 4. The adoption of test-optional policies from 1969 to 2020.

This approach maximizes the idea of holistic admissions, encouraging students of different socioeconomic backgrounds, talents, and interests to show what makes them unique. It levels the playing field, allowing students with lower GPAs and test scores to differentiate themselves from other competitive applicants through discussion of their life experiences and personal growth.

Conversely, the process of constructing a portfolio and answering more detailed essay questions is time intensive and will place heavier burdens on students during their senior year. It also places under-resourced students at a disadvantage to those of wealthier backgrounds who have more opportunities for extracurricular involvement, access to superior technology, and better mentorship during the application process. For that reason, it is critical that colleges consider factors such as socioeconomic status during the admission process, along with reshaping the application format.



Improve transparency about admissions criteria and the decision making process.

There are nearly 4,000 colleges in the United States that seniors need to sort through when deciding where to apply (“Digest of Educational Statistics”). Without a fully-formed sense of identity and limited information about different universities, most students are making a blind guess when it comes to choosing where to apply. It’s difficult for them to identify the unquantifiable characteristics that admissions officers evaluate. So, to clear the confusion, colleges need to be straightforward about qualifications they seek; this entails that colleges directly assert the required credentials on their campus websites and avoid marketing towards groups of students who are underqualified for admissions.

For example, schools could specify that they are searching for students who have research experience, who have been published in academic journals, or who have interned with a company. They could emphasize the school's dedication to hard work or philanthropic efforts. Providing clearer standards on campus tours, acceptance days, and websites would help students narrow down their prospective schools to the ones that best align with their values.

Clearer criteria yields a smaller pool of qualified applicants, helping to quell the surplus of applications. Colleges would thus be able to devote the proper consideration to each applicant. With explicit standards, institutions do not have to waste time or money marketing to students that do not meet their expectations. In the approach of increased transparency, universities do not lose selectivity and can be both competitive and honest in what they are searching for.

However, if schools specify criteria, students may be encouraged to model their lives after the qualifications mentioned by their dream school. They may choose extracurriculars that they know a college is looking for, rather than choosing activities that are meaningful and interesting for them. Their lives could become "college focused," and rather than matching schools with students, this approach could cause students to match themselves with a specific school. It is also possible that schools lose aspects of diversity, because every student applying to a given school with likely meet the standards they specify on admissions websites and tours.

Implement Direct Admissions for Qualified Students

In 2021, the Common Application launched the Direct Admissions Pilot which "proactively offers qualified students admission to select institutions within their home state" ("Direct Admissions"). Participating institutions provide the College Board with a GPA threshold and program capacity. These stipulations allow schools to maintain some degree of selectivity while also guaranteeing that qualified students are able to attend the institution.

The goal of the program is to allow students to select schools in the traditional manner, while also allowing institutions to identify students who would be successful at their college. It targets historically underrepresented demographics including Black, Latino, first generation, Indigenous and low-income students. In this manner, students who are uncertain of their qualifications are given an incentive to apply for college, knowing that they will be guaranteed a spot.

High School GPA Range	ACT	Old SAT Scores* (Critical Reading + Math only)	New SAT Scores* (Evidence Based Reading/Writing + Math)
3.5 - 4.0	17	850	930
3.0 - 3.49	19	930	1010
2.5 - 2.99	22	1030	1110
2.25 - 2.49	25	1140	1210
2.24 & below	considered by review only	considered by review only	considered by review only

Figure 5. Displays example standards for direct admissions. Tests scores that do not fall under the denoted ranges must receive individual review.

Data from the first pilot found that 53% of the 66 students who responded to an offer for direct admissions were first generation college students (“Direct Admissions”). And, the second pilot in 2022 discovered that students were 2.7 times more likely to apply to college if they received a notice of the direct admissions opportunity, ultimately indicating that the program is successful in encouraging marginalized groups to pursue higher education (“Direct Admissions”).

However, assured admissions is not a perfect solution. Colleges fear they will lose control over admissions criteria, and many believe that direct admit students are not as qualified as other applicants. Primarily relying on quantitative data breaks down the standards of equality and competition set by the holistic reforms discussed earlier in this issue brief. Therefore, it's critical to evaluate different types of admissions based on what they offer to students and colleges alike. Having alternative processes throughout the system, meaning that some schools offer assured admissions while others do not, allows students to choose whether they are seeking assured admissions or a more holistic review of their application.

APPROACH 2: LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD FOR ACCESS TO FINANCIAL AID.

Overview

As colleges become more and more expensive for households, many incoming college students are forced limit their application lists due to financial realities. Part of ensuring fairness within the college admissions system is creating a level financial playing field for all. This option will be highlighting 3 distinct features of a nationwide standardized program that will provide overarching access to college, using many of the pre-existing resources and tools created for financial aid.

There are hundreds of scholarship opportunities, fee waiver applications, and state and federal based aid programs. However, the applicants who need aid the most are usually uneducated on the opportunities they have. According to LendingTree, 85% of undergraduate students did not know that the FAFSA provided more than just student loans. This only begins to show the lack of education and information available for students. Education may be the key to connecting those who need financial aid with those who can provide it.

This approach includes creating a comprehensive tutorial of the FAFSA and Pell grants with instructions for applying, information sessions on application fee waiver programs, workshops on scholarship writing, and exposés on scholarship opportunities. It is meant to create financial accessibility for students whose educational opportunities might otherwise be limited by their socioeconomic status.

Education of FAFSA and Pell Grant

One of the biggest items serving as a barrier between students and higher education is concern surrounding finances. Fortunately, there are several financial aid programs available to students including FAFSA and Pell Grants. FAFSA stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid. This financial aid is not required to be paid back. The grants that are available through FAFSA include the Pell Grant, which is a need-based grant for undergraduate students.

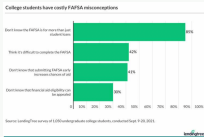


Figure 6. The common preconceptions of college financial aid

The Pell Grant covers a significant portion of tuition and is given based on the student's financial need, tuition, and enrollment status. Completing the FAFSA also makes students eligible for federal student loans, which often have lower interest rates than private student loans. These students also become eligible for work-study programs, providing part-time jobs for students on college campuses.

Overall, FAFSA is an important tool for students who require financial assistance in paying for college. However, despite the vast benefits of completing the FAFSA, many families do not pursue it, missing out on the opportunity to make college more affordable. In a 2019 report by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), 22% of students who were eligible for federal financial aid did not complete the FAFSA. The same GAO report found that students who did not complete the FAFSA may have missed out on \$2.6 billion in federal grants and loans in the 2016–2017 academic year. Others may not have reliable access to the internet or may not be fluent in English, making it difficult to complete the FAFSA.

One of the main challenges of completing the FAFSA is the sheer amount of information that is required. The form asks for detailed financial reports, including income, asset, and tax receipts, which can be overwhelming for families who are unfamiliar with monetary terms. Another challenge of completing the FAFSA is the length of the application itself. The form contains over 100 questions and can take several hours to complete. The process is confusing and burdensome, leaving many families unsure of how to answer certain questions or which documents they must submit.

Students and families need to be made aware of the financial aid options available to them. This approach outlines the creation of a federal program that offers comprehensive tutorials for families looking to apply for financial aid, walking them through the entire process and accounting for those who do not understand English by creating tutorials in a variety of languages. Raising awareness about financial aid programs such as FAFSA and Pell Grants can be crucial in encouraging students from low-income families to pursue higher education.

Fee Waivers, Scholarship Opportunities, and Workshops

As if receiving a college degree was not expensive enough, the costs of applying to college can hinder a student from educational opportunities. Application fees help cover the administrative costs of processing each application and actually help limit the applicant pool to only those who are serious about the college. The average application fee is \$50 per school (BestColleges), but many colleges charge even more. In addition to application fees, there are other expenses that must be considered, including SAT fees, AP tests fees, etc.

Sending in test scores to bolster an application costs money, and can be a major financial roadblock to seeking education. Therefore, it is important for students to look into application fee waivers and learn more about their eligibility, so they can get access to as many opportunities as possible.

In order to apply to application fee waivers, it is necessary to check if you are qualified for them. For many grants, the eligibility requirements match the requirements for public assistance, meaning that students who receive free lunch, for example, are also eligible for fee waivers. A workshop explaining the available opportunities would prevent a lack of financial education from hindering students' wills to apply to their dream schools. The workshop would include introductions to a number of financial assistance programs such as the Common App Fee Waiver, the NACAC Application Fee Waiver, and the Coalition App Fee Waiver. It would also share information, like the fact that some colleges and universities offer fee waivers directly through their admissions office if the student asks for them. There are more than 100 colleges in the nation that do not have application fees at all, and the proposed workshop would help introduce students to these affordable options. Sessions would also explore other ways of cutting down the cost of applying to college, such as getting SAT or ACT scores sent for free. These kinds of information would inspire applicants to apply to colleges they may have not considered by removing financial barriers to higher education.

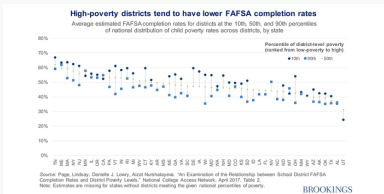


Figure 7. FAFSA completion rate and poverty level.

Starting Early

Time is of the essence when it comes to college preparation. While it may be impossible for some families to financially prepare 4 years in advance, making sure students know the avenues to achieving their goals both academically and financially is extremely important. Starting financial education programs in 9th grade ensures that incoming high school students are aware of the steps they can take to be academically competitive and financially prepared to apply to college.

As the founder of the education and business advisory firm ThreeEq, Jason Ma says, "Students and advisors must also monitor and adjust the execution of their game plan, building memorable and meaningful, if not impactful, experiences, as well as tangible college applications skills." Creating a step by step plan with advisors, like the one Ma discusses, is not easily accessible for all students.

The proposed federal program will make sure the programs and opportunities that have been outlined in this option are accessible for all students. This will allow them to take initiative of their academic journeys and financial planning. Providing younger students with ample information on how to utilize their opportunities may be the key to helping students, especially those from low income backgrounds, achieve an equal playing field in the process of college applications.

Possible Drawbacks to Approach 2

Unfortunately, money isn't infinite, and there are certain quotas allotted for financial aid. The goal of this approach is to increase the number of students using the opportunities for financial aid, but the likely outcome is that money from the FAFSA will run out more quickly. Grants are the first category of financial aid to run out of funding under the current system, and increasing knowledge on the financial aid process might make getting FAFSA grants and scholarships more competitive.

That being said, having a standardized system to educate students on FAFSA will make the system more fair, therefore those who have the most need can access the money. In addition, even after being educated on financial aid, some students will need counselors or other adults to guide them during the application process. While some public schools have or will receive the resources to provide their students with advisors, others may not, and this approach does not provide a detailed plan to solve the overarching issue of inequality within educational resource allocation.

Another possible downside is the subjectivity within scholarship organizations. Scholarships are not 100% guaranteed ways to raise money for going to college and, oftentimes, qualified applicants will not be awarded scholarships due to purely subjective reasons of the readers or even their unconscious bias. That being said, this option aims to balance the access to resources and make eligible candidates aware of their scholarship possibilities. While this option is not a surefire way of getting financial aid to every student who needs it, it takes a step towards educating every student who wants and needs financial aid or advising throughout the application process.

APPROACH 3: ENSURE EQUITY FOR MINORITY APPLICANTS.

Overview

While academics and activities are important factors when considering an applicant, it is also essential for admissions committees to assess who a student is and where he comes from. Higher education is not just about academics; it is a place where students from diverse backgrounds, ethnicities, and walks of life can come together and create a unique community.

However, many marginalized groups have difficulties competing with other applicants who may have had more opportunities.

Thus, there are many different aspects that should be considered when admitting students, including unique challenges and circumstances that stem from different socioeconomic statuses or ethnic backgrounds. This approach aims at overcoming the admissions boundaries that many minority applicants face.

Uphold Affirmative Action

Ethnic diversity is essential to higher education. With the pending Supreme Court case decision on Affirmative Action, there is debate surrounding affirmative action policies. Opponents argue that some groups, such as Asians, are held to higher standards than other ethnic groups under current affirmative action policies. However, without any legislation upholding standards of diversity, many minority groups could become underrepresented in institutions of higher education. In 1995, the University of California banned affirmative action, with the consequence being that African American and Latino enrollment fell by nearly half (Jaschik). If affirmative action were to be abolished now, Black enrollment across the nation could go down to "1960s levels," and enrollment of other minority populations may suffer similarly (Saul).

Additionally, the loss of Affirmative Action could affect recruitment programs that are aimed at educating and providing opportunities to underrepresented groups. These programs are often students' first introduction to college-level academics. Outreach programs encourage minority students to pursue higher education, and without them, it is likely that fewer minorities would apply to college (Saul). The withdrawal of Affirmative Action does not only affect minority groups. It hampers a college's ability to maintain intellectual diversity within its student body, creating an inferior learning environment for all students.

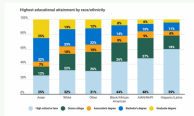


Figure 8. Highest education level according to ethnicity

End Legacy Preference

Legacy students are a contentious issue for applicants to the most elite universities in the country. At many top schools, children of alumni have a doubled or even quadrupled chance of getting accepted compared to that of regular students (Pinsker). This practice disadvantages students who don't come from wealthy or well-connected backgrounds and ultimately harms the diversity of the school environment by giving more seats to white, privileged students (Gross). However, it fosters a united culture in colleges and may help schools receive funding from loyal wealthy families (Pinsker).

Diversity enriches the educational merits of a school by giving students insight into cultural and sociological differences that they will inevitably encounter outside their schooling. Some universities, like MIT and Johns Hopkins, have dropped the practice of preferential admissions for legacy students, but other top schools still fight to keep the practice. Schools that favor legacies argue that they are more likely to donate to the school when they become alumni; however, no empirical data suggests that legacy students are more likely to donate (Pinsker). In the end, the practice of preference towards legacies is antithetical to the broad mission of diversity and has not been shown to have any financial advantages for institutions.

Consider Socioeconomic Backgrounds more Heavily

Socioeconomic inequality is an impactful factor in the current college admissions system. Students from a family of higher socioeconomic status may have the luxury of attending a private school with a more rigorous curriculum. Private schools charge a tuition rate to all of their attendees, with the average national tuition rate being \$12,350 in 2022 (Hansen).

As a result, private schools have higher budgets, so they can offer a higher caliber of classes and employ qualified guidance counselors who have greater connections and a deeper understanding of the application process than their public school counterparts. Students from higher socioeconomic statuses may also attend more competitive public schools that boast similar resources to many private schools.

A possible solution to this problem is to consider socioeconomic factors more heavily when evaluating applicants. Instead of judging an applicant based on scores or classes taken, the admissions officers should include extracurricular challenges and obligations in the review process. Students' involvement should be considered in tandem with the opportunities available in their community. Considering socioeconomic limitations to opportunities would require more research on prospective students by the university, consuming more time and resources, but would ultimately help ensure equality in admissions.

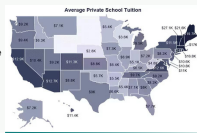


Figure 9. The average tuition by state for private high schools (2022)

SUMMARY & ANALYSIS

Review of Approaches

There are numerous difficulties and inequities that plague the current college admissions process. To ensure fairness while selecting students for higher education, three proposals have been made.

The first proposition is to alter admissions. It urges universities to find an alternative to archaic quantitative measurements of student success, such as standardized testing. Portfolio submissions showing actual student work will be required in the new system, helping emphasize accomplishments that are meaningful for students. More precise admissions standards from schools are also a part of the proposed solution. As a result of more precise standards, universities will recruit a select audience of students, helping end the surge in application numbers. Finally, the approach includes the implementation of guaranteed admissions, which would encourage minorities to apply to college, ease students' fears of rejection, and provide an alternative option to traditional review processes.

The second approach concerns financial aid and proposes solutions to help underprivileged families with the college application process. The approach suggests the creation of an education program that will inform students about their eligibility for financial aid like the FAFSA and Pell Grant, which could help more families afford college. The program will begin during students' freshman year, offering them ample time to prepare for the college application process.

The final approach is based on the necessity of diversity in every learning environment, and it helps ensure minority applicants are equally represented in higher education. The approach suggests that programs like affirmative action are essential. It also proposes that legacies are erased from the admissions process. Finally, approach three recommends that admissions officers place more emphasis on the socioeconomic status of applicants and how students' family situations can affect their applications.

All three approaches aim to reinvent the way schools decide what students to accept. To reconstruct an entire admissions system is difficult, but through the review of these three options, one can see the parts of the process that can be problematic and consider what needs to change to ensure equality in access to higher education.

Approach 1: Rethink the way we evaluate applications.

Pros

- College admissions resources are better allocated to properly evaluate prospective students' applications
- Low-class, minorities, and first-generation students have equal chances of admission
- Students can show their values and personalities in applications
- Colleges are able to construct a specific school identity/reputation
- Students can decide to apply to a school with direct admissions or holistic review, based on the way they want their applications evaluated

Cons

- Colleges lose some of their selectivity and mystery
- Universities lose profitability from application fees
- College Board and ACT Inc suffer extreme losses from test-optional policies
- Students are forced to decide which schools cater to their goals the best instead of applying to multiple schools
- Applications become more labor-intensive for students

Approach 2: Level the playing field for access to financial aid.

Pros

- Helps students find available scholarships and connections
- Provides students with guidance during the application process
- Beginning programs in 9th grade gives students more time to learn and lessens overwhelm during senior year
- Families will gain a more in depth understanding of FASFA, making the completion process easier
- FASFA will be offered in different languages so all families feel comfortable with the material

Cons

- More people taking advantage of FASFA means that FASFA won't be able to give out as much money to each student
- Scholarships are not always equally distributed
- Scholarships are not always enough to provide for college education
- Not all schools and communities have the resources to provide students with the suggested information and opportunities, and there are not enough resources to reach every community that needs the program

Approach 3: Ensure equity for minority students.

Pros

- Creates cultural and intellectual diversity that is essential to higher learning
- Allows minorities to overcome common educational boundaries and go further than previous generations
- Could lead to increased employment and higher salaries for disadvantaged minorities, ending the cycle of poverty

Cons

- Students being held to different standards depending on their ethnicity creates an inherently unequal admissions process
- Causes competition between people of the same ethnic group for a limited number of allocated spots
- More competitive students may not be accepted in place of less competitive minorities due to affirmative action
- Consumes a lot of time and resources to fully consider a person's background and ethnicity



PLEASE TAKE SOME TIME TO FILL OUT
OUR POST-DELIBERATION QUESTIONNAIRE

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FIGURES

[Fig. 1] https://www.canva.com/link?target=https%3A%2F%2Fresearch.com%2Feducation%2Flist-of-college-acceptance-rates&design=DAFAQ_L8xRo&accessRole=owner&linkSource=comment

[Fig. 2] https://www.canva.com/design/DAFAQ_L8xRo/f8LcXSVcNYQ4H0dD39JPug/edit?ui=eyJEljpw7kEiOansiQSi6iktBRmJhaFFWmkZFln19fQ&utm_content=DAFAQ_L8xRo&utm_campaign=comment_share&utm_medium=comment_link&utm_source=comment

[Fig. 3] <https://www.thecrimson.com/article/2022/4/1/admissions-class-of-2026/>

[Fig. 4] <https://www.thirdway.org/report/toppling-testing-covid-19-test-optional-college-admissions-and-implications-for-equity>

[Fig. 5] https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fbrandcollegeconsulting.com%2Fassured-and-automatic-admissions-at-texas-colleges%2F&psig=AOvVawIc_nR6vCveQU5FEEvRYHI&ust=1677357572819000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=OCA8QjRxqFwoTCLCOOISCr_OCFQAAAAAdAAAAABAA

[Fig. 6] https://www.canva.com/design/DAFAQ_L8xRo/f8LcXSVcNYQ4H0dD39JPug/edit?ui=eyJEljpw7kEiOansiQSi6iktBRmJlcHVSTjJ3In19fQ&utm_content=DAFAQ_L8xRo&utm_campaign=comment_share&utm_medium=comment_link&utm_source=comment

[Fig. 7] <https://www.educationnext.org/fafsa-completion-rates-matter-mind-data/>

[Fig. 8] https://www.canva.com/design/DAFaq_L8xRo/f8LcXSVCNYQ4H0dD39JPug/edit?ui=eyJEljp7lkEiOnsiQSi6lktBRmJRbnBmVWV3InI9fQ&utm_content=DAFaq_L8xRo&utm_campaign=comment_share&utm_medium=comment_link&utm_source=comment

[Fig. 9] https://www.canva.com/design/DAFaq_L8xRo/f8LcXSVCNYQ4H0dD39JPug/edit?ui=eyJEljp7lkEiOnsiQSi6lktBRmJlc3NqbE9vlnI9fQ&utm_content=DAFaq_L8xRo&utm_campaign=comment_share&utm_medium=comment_link&utm_source=comment