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Diversity among Equals: Educational Opportunity and the State of Affirmative Admissions in New England

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Diversity among Equals: Educational Opportunity and the State of Affirmative Admissions in New England

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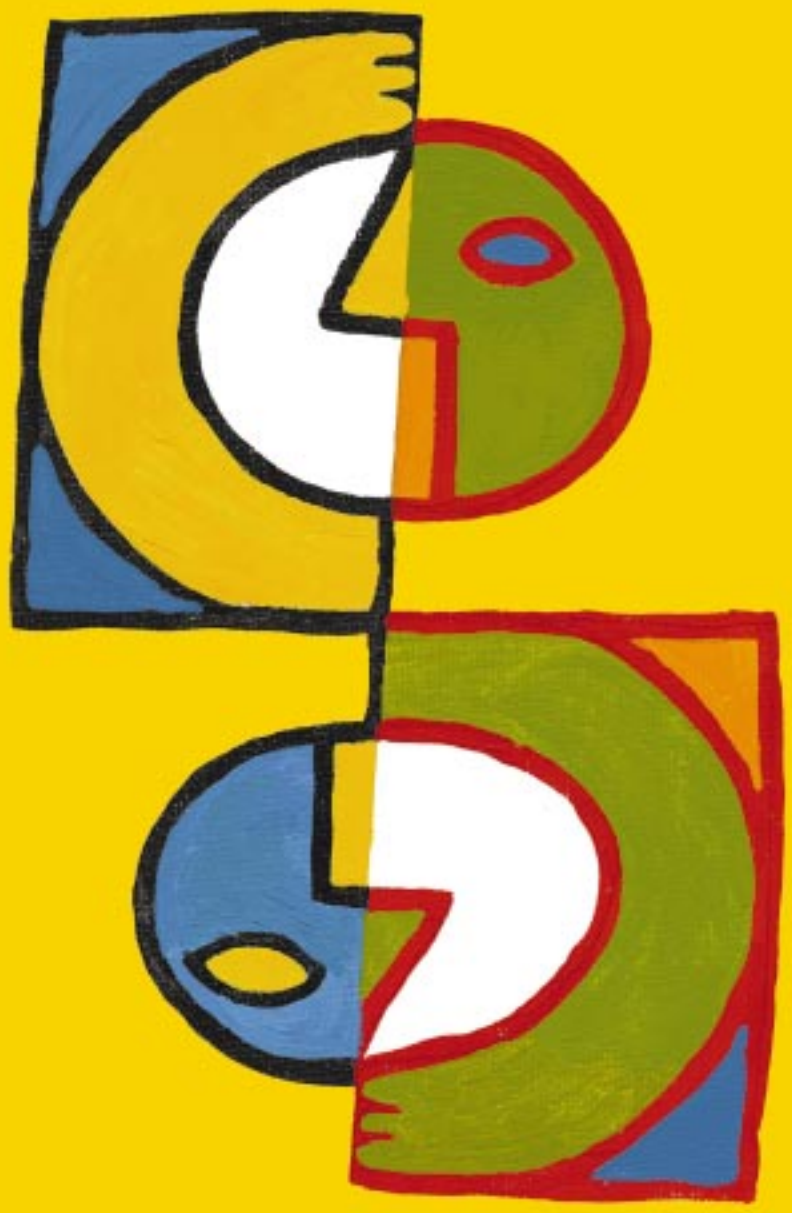
DIVERSITY AMONG EQUALS

Educational Opportunity and the State of Affirmative Admissions in New England

Prepared by the Center for Education Policy (CEP) and Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER), University of Massachusetts at Amherst



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The first in the Charting Educational Pathways series

DIVERSITY AMONG EQUALS

Educational Opportunity and the State of Affirmative Admissions in New England

Stephen P. Coelen, Joseph B. Berger, and Patricia H. Crosson

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University of Massachusetts at Amherst

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The first in the Charting Educational Pathways series on educational access and opportunity in New England

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Since reports cannot be written by consensus, however, the primary authors hope they have done an adequate job representing various points of view that have derived from the collaboration. Under any circumstances, they accept all responsibility for any errors that remain.

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FOREWORD

As America has led the world in its commitment to universal education, New England colleges and universities have achieved distinction by maintaining strong traditions of academic excellence and educational opportunity. The region is experiencing extraordinary growth in undergraduate enrollment, much of it attributable to the overall growth in Minority populations. It is very clear that immigrants and Minority populations will play a central role in the new regional economy. These realities underscore the urgency of providing equitable education and training beyond high school to these populations.

Diversity Among Equals reviews the practice of Affirmative Admissions as a strategy for achieving diversity within our region's colleges and universities. The report's most compelling conclusion—surprising perhaps in the context of widely publicized national controversies about Affirmative Admissions—is that there is no significant evidence that colleges have reduced standards to admit greater numbers of Minority students. By increasing educational access to a broader segment of the population, the region's higher education institutions have taken crucial steps toward assuring the vitality and vibrancy of New England's future economy and civic life.

But this is not a time for congratulatory complacency. The study documents that the pool of qualified Minority students is much too small, highlighting the need for shared responsibility between K-12 and postsecondary education to dramatically improve the preparation of Minority students for college. *Diversity Among Equals* also notes contemporary policy trends that would appear to create new barriers to increased participation of Minority and low-income students in higher education. These include shifts toward merit-based financial aid rather than need-based aid; greater reliance on high-stakes testing for high school graduation and college admissions; reducing or eliminating remedial and developmental education in higher education; rising college costs; and legal pressures on Affirmative Admissions policies. Alone and in combination, these policies could significantly impede efforts to educate fully the populations that will represent more than 30 percent of the New England labor force by 2010.

Diversity Among Equals is the first report in a research series by the Massachusetts Institute for Social and Economic Research (MISER) and the Center for Education Policy (CEP) at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, commissioned by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation. The series was created to assist educational leaders and policymakers in assessing and eliminating barriers to educational access and achievement for low-income and Minority populations in New England.

We hope that *Diversity Among Equals* will help advance our understanding of this important regional and national issue and foster the kind of informed dialogue that is necessary to sustain and invent responsible approaches to enhancing education for all people.

Blenda J. Wilson, Ph.D.
President and CEO, Nellie Mae Education Foundation
October 16, 2001

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

New England colleges and universities have made significant and effective investments in access using Affirmative Admissions strategies—broadly defined as the use of race or ethnic background as one of many criteria informing admissions decisions—to increase Minority student representation on campus. These efforts, combined with the increasing importance of a college degree and the overall growth of Minority populations in the region, have fueled a substantial growth in Minority undergraduate enrollment.

Despite tremendous progress, continuing gains toward educational equity and access may be thwarted by misconceptions about Affirmative Admissions. The exact nature of these strategies has been unclear and frequently misunderstood by the general public, creating perceptions that Affirmative Admissions result in unqualified Minority students being accepted over qualified White students. In recent years, the changing political and legal climate, fiscal constraints, and imperatives for education reform and accountability have changed the policy landscape for Minority student admissions making progress more difficult. At the same time, Minority group populations in all New England states are increasing, and there is a growing need to increase the number of well-prepared college graduates for the New England labor force.

The convergence of these trends highlights the need for greater understanding by the general public and by policymakers about the perceptions and realities of Affirmative Action in the college admissions process. This report provides a status report on Affirmative Admissions in New England, focusing on the use of Affirmative Action in college admissions and examining potential ramifications of policy changes in the six states of the New England region—Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Diversity Among Equals reveals how educational leaders perceive Affirmative Admissions, the nature of regional Affirmative Admissions policies, and the numbers of students affected by current enrollment strategies. This report is part of a larger project in the Nellie Mae Education Foundation's *Charting Educational Pathways* series on educational access and opportunity in New England. The larger project identifies recent education policy changes in the New England region and examines their effect on patterns of high school graduation, college enrollment, and undergraduate degree completion.

COMPONENTS AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Studying the complex policy environment that surrounds Affirmative Admissions required a sophisticated methodological approach, using a variety of tools to produce a comprehensive analysis. In order to accomplish the goals of this project, research was organized into several components:

- **legal analysis** of pertinent issues surrounding postsecondary access and equity, including an assessment of the status of Affirmative Admissions and related issues based on recent court cases;
- **interviews** with postsecondary and K-12 leaders and educators at the state, district, and school levels, and a **survey** of postsecondary institutions[1] in New England, which provided greater understanding of how state and institutional leaders perceive existing and anticipated changes in the policy environment in New England and the potential impact of policy shifts on subsequent student enrollment patterns; and
- **econometric modeling** to assess the practice of Affirmative Admissions across New England using data from The College Board on individual student applications to four-year institutions[2] throughout the region. Specifically, this analysis examined: whether four-year institutions admitted Minority students with lower academic credentials than the minimum credentials required of White students; and the differences in the comparative admissions rates for Minority and White students above the minimum academic credentials.

New England institutions were divided into 18 different segments using such criteria as level of degree awarded (*two-* or *four-year*); control of institution (*public* or *private*); geography broken down into *Southern* (Connecticut and Rhode Island), *Central* (Massachusetts), and *Northern* (Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont) New England;[3] and selectivity, defined in this report as an evaluation of the way pairs of institutions react to common applications (*selective* or *more selective*).

KEY FINDINGS

By examining the specific aspects of Affirmative Admissions—the legal status, the perception of current practices, and the realities of what institutions actually do—this study provides a comprehensive view of New England's evolving landscape of college opportunity. The key findings from this study are as follows:

[1] The survey was mailed to 244 undergraduate institutions among 247 identified across the New England region; 221 institutions responded, yielding an institutional response rate of 91 percent.

[2] It is important to note that only four-year institutions are the focus of the econometric analysis. The region's public and private two-year segments are not included in this analysis as they frequently practice open admissions or are less competitive in admissions than four-year institutions.

[3] New England was divided into regions in order to reduce the categories of institutional types into a manageable number while recognizing patterns of social, economic, and demographic trends within the six-state region.

- Perceptions of Affirmative Admissions are not always consistent with the reality of college admissions in New England. It is a widely held perception that colleges and universities "lower the bar" in order to admit Minority students and diversify campus enrollments, but this study provides clear evidence that four-year segments in New England are not engaged in the practice of reduced admission thresholds for Minority students.
- From 1995 to 1999, New England four-year colleges and universities have not admitted Minority students who fail to meet minimum non-Affirmative Admissions standards.
- Minority students accepted at four-year colleges and universities in New England *are qualified* to attend these institutions. Minority students who are enrolled in New England are as likely as any other student to succeed in college based on meeting minimum non-Affirmative Admissions academic standards.
- All four-year higher education segments in New England accept qualified Minority students at rates equal to or greater than those for White students, not just private, more selective institutions as suggested in previous research. Such strategies are often used to compensate for the yield rate differences for Minority students compared to White students.
- Most college and university leaders in New England believe in the importance of a diverse student body as an essential part of undergraduate education.
- Minority students continue to be under-represented as a percentage of the undergraduate population in New England.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The policy implications of these findings for New England's postsecondary institutions are extensive. The following recommendations are particularly targeted on the activities and policies of colleges and universities:

- New England's proud history of promoting educational access and diversity should serve as a foundation for providing unwavering support for Affirmative Admissions at the institutional and state levels.
- Colleges and universities in New England should work with policymakers and K-12 educators to increase the numbers of Minority students who aspire to and are prepared for postsecondary educational attendance and degree attainment.
- Postsecondary institutions in New England should clearly articulate what diversity means on their campuses and document how the benefits of diversity are valued as an integral part of their educational missions.
- Colleges and universities in New England should continue to seek many forms of diversity in their admissions processes.

- Colleges and universities in New England should use multiple criteria in the admission process.
- Colleges and universities in New England need to invest adequate resources in the admission and enrollment management process.
- In order to achieve institutional diversity goals, colleges and universities in New England should conduct analyses and assessments of their own admission policies and practices.
- Given the complexity of issues surrounding Affirmative Admissions, educational leaders in New England need more information about the current parameters of and potential future legal challenges to Affirmative Admissions.

While it is clear that New England has much to be proud of regarding the commitment of institutions to diversify their campus enrollments, this report also suggests that greater efforts are still needed to increase access and opportunity for Minority students in the region. The many positive findings from this study can and should serve as a call to action that builds on the effective policies that already exist in New England higher education.

INTRODUCTION

Colleges and universities in New England have a strong tradition of excellence in many areas: a commitment to provide equitable access to postsecondary education is one of the most notable. Enabling all students—regardless of race, ethnicity, or family resources—to access education beyond the high school level has been one of the primary purposes of government policies and programs, and a central unifying theme across institutions in the region. These efforts, combined with the increasing importance of a college degree and the overall growth of Minority populations in the region, have fueled a substantial growth in undergraduate enrollment. Between 1986 and 1999, enrollment at postsecondary institutions in New England grew by 36 percent for African Americans, 68 percent for Hispanics, and 52 percent for Native Americans,[4] compared to 5 percent growth for White students. (See Figure One.) But New England's approximately 83,000 African American, Hispanic, and Native American students represent just over 10 percent of the region's total college enrollment[5]—still below their share of New England's 18- to 24-year-old population, which was nearly 19 percent in 2000 and expected to grow quickly in the next decade.[6]

New England institutions have made significant and effective investments in equitable access using Affirmative Admissions strategies to increase Minority student representation on campus. Affirmative Admissions is an Affirmative Action strategy that is broadly defined as the use of race or ethnic background by postsecondary educational institutions as one of many criteria informing admissions decisions, in order: (a) to compensate for past and/or current discrimination or inequities in educational opportunities for populations who have been traditionally under-represented in higher education; and/or (b) to provide learning environments in which all students can experience the educational benefits of a diverse learning community.

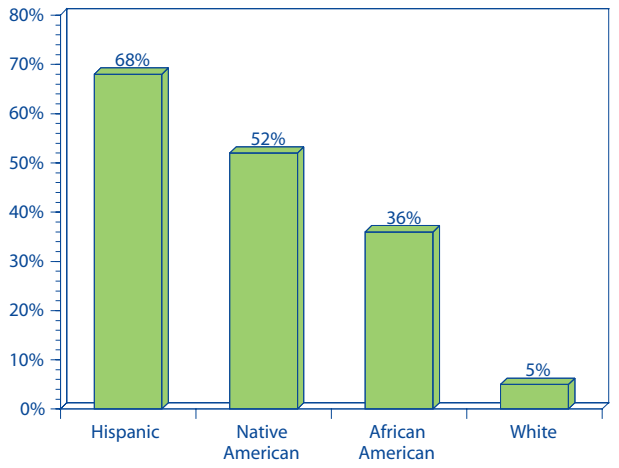
Despite tremendous progress, continuing gains in educational equity and access may be thwarted by misconceptions about Affirmative Action and Affirmative Admissions. The exact nature of these strategies is unclear and frequently misunderstood by the general public, creating perceptions that Affirmative Admissions results in unqualified Minority students being accepted over qualified White students. In recent years, the changing political climate, legal challenges, fiscal constraints, and imperatives for education reform and accountability have changed the policy landscape for Minority student admissions. At the same time, Minority group populations in all New England states are increasing in absolute

[4] These groups—African American, Hispanic, and Native American students—compose the under-represented Minority populations on which this study concentrates. Asian students and students of "Other" race are not included in the analyses as their participation rates in postsecondary education are greater than their share of the New England 18- to 24-year old population. Therefore, they are not considered underrepresented in the context of this report.

[5] All enrollment numbers are derived from NEBHE (2001).

[6] Census 2000 data, SF1, U.S. Bureau of the Census, as compiled by MISER, University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

Figure One: Growth in Enrollment at New England Postsecondary Institutions, 1986 to 1999



Source: NEBHE, 2001.

and relative numbers, and there is a growing need to increase the number of well-prepared college graduates for the New England labor force.

The convergence of these trends highlights the need for greater understanding by the general public and by policymakers of perceptions and realities of Affirmative Action in the college admissions process. This report provides a status report on Affirmative Admissions in New England, focusing on the use of Affirmative Action in college admissions process and examining potential ramifications of policy changes in the six states of the New England region—Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Diversity Among Equals looks at how New England colleges and universities provide access for Minority students, a critical issue at a time when the number of Minorities entering the labor force in the region is expected to grow from 13 percent to more than 30 percent in three southernmost New England states.[7] While significant new court decisions[8] in Georgia and Michigan and administrative decisions in Florida raise doubt about the practice of Affirmative Admissions, this study reveals how educational leaders perceive Affirmative Admissions, the nature of regional Affirmative Admissions policies, including which types of higher educational institutions engage in Affirmative Admissions, and the numbers of students affected by current enrollment strategies. This study largely substantiates William Bowen and Derek Bok's 1998 research on the benefits of Affirmative Admissions for African Americans in *The Shape of the River*,[9] while extending their work with new findings that are specific to New England, but include more than just the small set of more selective institutions.

This report is part of a larger project sponsored by the Nellie Mae Education Foundation's *Charting Educational Pathways* series on access and opportunity in New England. The larger project identifies recent education policy changes in the New England region and examines their effect on patterns of high school graduation, college enrollment, and degree completion. The series focuses on the question of how such policies will affect access and opportunity for Minority and low-income students. Challenges to Affirmative Admissions are one example of these types of policies.

[7] These figures reflect the projected demographic shift specific to the three most racially diverse states in New England, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island, and are taken from Coelen (1993).

[8] *Johnson v. Board of Regents* (2001); *Grazt v. Bollinger* (2000); Schmidt (2001).

[9] See page 22 for a discussion of Bowen and Bok's findings.

COMPONENTS AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Studying the complex policy environment that surrounds Affirmative Admissions required a sophisticated methodological approach, using a variety of tools to produce a comprehensive analysis. In order to accomplish the goals of this project, research was organized into five components:

- analysis of pertinent legal issues surrounding postsecondary access and equity;
- interviews with postsecondary campus and state leaders;
- interviews with knowledgeable K-12 leaders and educators at the state, district, and school levels;
- a survey of postsecondary education institutions in New England; and
- econometric analyses of student data.

The legal analysis offered an assessment of the status of Affirmative Admissions and related issues based on court decisions over the last several years. The survey and interview components of this study provided greater understanding of how state and institutional leaders in K-12 and postsecondary education perceive existing and anticipated changes in the policy environment in New England and the potential impact of shifts in Affirmative Admissions on subsequent student enrollment patterns. The data from these components are important in and of themselves, but these data also helped determine the assumptions for the econometric modeling used in analyzing the individual student-level data. Taken together, these multiple sources and types of data provided an empirical basis for developing a fuller understanding of the combination of shifting demographic trends and the dynamic policy environment surrounding Affirmative Admissions.

Due to confidentiality requirements,[10] the study focused only on *groups* of institutions. Clustered "segments" of institutions that operate with similar admissions policies and restrictions, market demographics, and reputations with regard to selectivity were formed. Besides ensuring confidentiality, clustering institutions permitted detailed analysis of a more manageable number of segments—18 groups as opposed to more than 200 individual institutions. New England institutions were divided into 18 different segments using the following criteria:

[10] The research team was allowed access to the data on the condition that it not be used to identify individual institutions or students without permission of the institutions.

- **Level of degree awarded:** whether the institution was a *two-year* institution, predominantly offering associate's degrees, or a *four-year* institution, predominantly offering bachelor's degrees;
- **Control:** whether the institution is *publicly* or *privately* controlled;[11]
- **Geography:** whether the institution was located in *Southern* (Connecticut and Rhode Island), *Central* (Massachusetts), and *Northern* (Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont) New England;[12] and
- **Level of selectivity,** in this report defined as an evaluation of the way pairs of institutions react to common applications: whether the institution offered *open admissions* or whether they were *selective* or *more selective* in their admissions process.

Institutional control and degree offerings both have obvious effects on admissions policy and segmenting institutions around these factors is reasonably straightforward.[13] Selectivity is far more complex—classifications developed by publications such as *U.S. News and World Report* and Peterson's *Guide to Colleges and Universities* could not be used because these rating systems reflect more than admissions competitiveness.[14] Both *U.S. News and World Report* and Peterson's use average SAT scores and/or high school grade point averages (GPAs) of freshmen in computing admissions competitiveness. In contrast, this study set out to first empirically establish segments based on admissions competitiveness, and then determine minimum SAT scores and GPAs in each segment. (See Appendix A for a more detailed explanation of the selectivity methodology.)

Table One: The Institutional Segments of New England Postsecondary Education

Southern (CT and RI)	Central (MA)	Northern (ME, NH, and VT)
Southern Private, More Selective Four-Year Institutions	Central Private, More Selective Four-Year Institutions	Northern Private, More Selective Four-Year Institutions
Southern Private Selective Four-Year Institutions	Central Private Selective Four-Year Institutions	Northern Private Selective Four-Year Institutions
Southern Private Two-Year Institutions	Central Private Two-Year Institutions	Northern Private Two-Year Institutions
Southern Public, More Selective (Flagship) Four-Year Institutions*	Central Public, More Selective (Flagship) Four-Year Institutions*	Northern Public, More Selective (Flagship) Four-Year Institutions*
Southern Public Selective Four-Year Institutions	Central Public Selective Four-Year Institutions	Northern Public Selective Four-Year Institutions
Southern Public Two-Year Institutions	Central Public Two-Year Institutions	Northern Public Two-Year Institutions

Note: * The public, more selective segments are referred to as public flaghsip segments.

[11] Private institutions discussed in this report are non-profit institutions.

[12] New England was divided into regions in order to reduce the categories of institutional types into a manageable number while recognizing patterns of social, economic, and demographic trends within the six-state region.

[13] Most institutions offer only two-year or four-year degrees. Some, however, offer both. These were classified by the matriculation of the majority of their students. The University of Vermont, often characterized as "somewhat private," was classified as public in this report.

[14] Webster (2001) notes *U.S. News and World Report's* use of 16 measures, only three of which measure student selectivity. Of these, one embodies SAT/ACT scores directly; see pp. 236-37. The use of other measures diffuses the focus on selectivity; the definitional use of SAT/ACT defeats the purpose of defining segments in which varying SAT levels can be measured for the segments.

It is important to note that selectivity levels were compiled for all institutions sharing five or more common applicants with other institutions. Selectivity levels were not applied to either private or public two-year institutions (the latter typically known as community colleges) since they are largely open admissions institutions. These institutions have varying admissions criteria but generally are not as competitive in admissions as four-year institutions. Among the four-year institutions, 28 private institutions and six public institutions—subsequently referred to as public flagships[15]—were classified as more selective, while the remaining private and public colleges and universities were characterized as selective. The resulting segments are shown in Table One.[16]

INTERVIEW AND SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Three broad goals guided the development of the sample used in the **postsecondary interviews:**

- Adequate representation of the types of institutions found across the region with respect to control (public/private), selectivity, Carnegie classification type, and local setting (urban/suburban/small town/rural).
- Adequate representation of institutional diversity within the state. Institutions selected included the public flagship university, a public two-year college, and two private institutions (one that was more selective and one that was selective). Additional institutions were selected to participate in some states in order to balance the overall representation of institutional types at the regional level.
- Comparatively higher racial/ethnic minority enrollments at the selected institutions, other selection criteria being equal.

Postsecondary interviews were conducted at 28 campuses—six two-year colleges and 22 four-year institutions—and six state board offices, with all six states in New England represented in the sample. Eighteen of the institutions were public and 10 were private. Nine of the institutions were urban, four were suburban, 12 were based in small towns, and three were rural. The 28 institutions also represent a wide range of selectivity. A total of 104 interviews was conducted with 10 state-level officials, 20 presidents, 20 chief academic officers, 28 chief admissions/enrollment management officers, and 26 financial aid directors.

The **K-12 interviews** were conducted with a sample of leaders at the state, district, and school levels across New England chosen to represent the various types of communities (e.g. rural, suburban, and urban) found throughout the six states. A total of 45 K-12 inter-

[15] The six flagship institutions are the largest campuses in each state's public university system. These institutions exercise more selectivity in the admissions process in addition to having greater resources at their disposal, as well as other characteristics (such as mission) that set them apart from the other public colleges and universities.

[16] A list of the individual institutions comprising each segment can be found in Appendix B.

views were conducted. Participants included eight officials in state department of education offices, one legislator, two legislative aides, 14 administrators in central school district offices, and 20 individuals (principals, coordinators, and guidance counselors) working at high schools.

The **postsecondary survey** was mailed to 244 undergraduate institutions among 247 identified across the New England region. Surveys were returned from 221 of these institutions, yielding an institutional response rate of 91 percent. The distribution of institutional types and locations closely mirrors the region.

ECONOMETRIC MODELING METHODOLOGY

Data used for evaluating the practices of New England colleges and universities in the admissions process came from The College Board. The data were taken from two similar market research instruments—the Admitted Student Questionnaire (ASQ) and the Admitted Student Questionnaire Plus (ASQ+)—primarily produced for four-year institutions. Participating colleges and universities send one of the ASQ surveys to all admitted students (whether they end up enrolling or not) in the spring as students are making their enrollment decisions. The surveys are designed to give institutions a better understanding of the decision-making process of students, as well as the practices of other institutions. The surveys ask the student to list other schools to which s/he applied and to report the outcome of each of those applications. The student is asked to rank the administering school's characteristics—ranging from financial aid offers, to sports, to library resources—against the other schools to which s/he applied. Both surveys also include questions on educational background (SAT scores, GPA, class rank) and demographics (age, gender, race/ethnicity, parental income).

The data examined were compiled from responses to all ASQ and ASQ+ surveys administered by New England colleges from 1995 to 1999. Sixty-four of the 247 New England two- and four-year institutions administered the ASQ or the ASQ+ over this five-year period.[17] The ASQ/ASQ+ dataset was transformed from a student-centered one to a dataset that focuses on the admissions application as the unit of analysis. The data from nearly 400,000 applications were then analyzed using a variety of statistical techniques, including descriptive, non-paired, and paired t-tests, and logistic regression.

[17] The 64 New England ASQ/ASQ+ administering institutions accounted for 135,400 returned surveys, reporting on 881,046 applications made by responding students to institutions across the country. Since only applications to New England schools were of interest for this study, applications to schools outside of New England were eliminated, leaving data on 393,161 applications to New England institutions. These data naturally produce institutional acceptance rates that are higher than actual acceptance rates because the administering institutions ask each admitted student about at least one application that has been accepted—their own. This problem was overcome by applying sample weights derived from institutionally reported acceptance rates collected by The College Board. The strength of the data, however, comes from the fact that there are many applications reported on the completed surveys that ended in non-acceptance.

THE CONTEXT OF AFFIRMATIVE ADMISSIONS

Affirmative Action is a major public policy issue currently dominating much of the political and legal landscape in American higher education. This report focuses on the application of Affirmative Action in postsecondary education admissions, though the term covers a wider range of social policies beyond education. Affirmative Action became a formally and legally recognized concept in 1964 with the passage of the Civil Rights Act; Title VI of the Act states that institutions receiving federal funding cannot discriminate against any individuals on the basis of race, color of skin, or national origin. Almost every educational institution in the United States receives federal funding and therefore is subject to the Affirmative Action standards found in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act. Thus, educational institutions are required to comply with Affirmative Action mandates in the hiring and firing of personnel, the awarding of contracts, and in the admission and education of students.

Once relied upon as a remedy for historical discrimination, Affirmative Action more recently has become a source of debate. The contentious atmosphere has risen in part because of misconceptions about the actual condition and use of Affirmative Action in the postsecondary context. The goal of this study is to broaden understanding of the current state of Affirmative Action in the college admissions process.

Different assumptions behind the implementation of Affirmative Admissions, coupled with a dearth of guidance on interpretation and implementation at the campus level, have led to a variety of postsecondary admissions policies aimed at reversing the pattern of racial discrimination that previously characterized the admissions process at many institutions. Some institutions have used race as a dominant criterion in admissions, while other colleges and universities have used race as just one of many criteria considered when making an admissions decision. Three main practices have emerged:

- The use of **quotas**, setting implicit or, in some cases, explicit goals for admitting and enrolling specific numbers or percentages of students of color;
- **Enhanced rate admissions,** admitting qualified Minority students at higher rates than White students with similar academic credentials;[18] and

[18] Credentials refer to the traditional use of standardized test scores and high school grades to determine students' levels of academic preparation and achievement.

- **Reduced threshold admissions,** admitting Minority students with lower academic credentials than the minimum credentials required of White students.

All of these practices might have been used over time at any single institution separately or simultaneously. The varying policies and practices used by different institutions resulted in disparate effects from campus to campus.

Affirmative Admissions came under a number of legal challenges in the 1960s and 1970s, leading to the landmark United States Supreme Court *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke* (1978) decision when a lawsuit was brought by a White student against the medical school at the University of California at Davis. The student claimed he was wrongfully denied admission to the school on the basis of race since his test scores were higher than admitted Minority students. In a sharply divided decision, the court affirmed the legality of Title VI, but struck down the use of rigid, racially defined quotas as a legally acceptable means of practicing Affirmative Admissions. While *Bakke* provided a narrower definition of acceptable admissions policies, institutions still had significant leeway to interpret the *Bakke* ruling permitting the use of race and ethnicity as one of several criteria in the admissions process.

Opponents of Affirmative Action and Affirmative Admissions have argued that racial preferences violate the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution, which protects against differential classifications of individuals by the government. Courts now tend to subject racial classifications to the most stringent form of judicial scrutiny ("strict scrutiny"). Actions designed to address racial issues must satisfy a compelling governmental interest and be narrowly tailored to that interest. The Supreme Court has recognized two interests as potentially compelling: (a) the elimination of the present effects of past discrimination; and (b) the achievement of a diverse student body in the context of university admissions decisions. Because New England colleges and universities have not had a history of official exclusion of Minority applicants, application of Affirmative Admissions in the region is typically described as being used to achieve a diverse student body.

In *Bakke*, the Supreme Court held that universities could use race or ethnic background as one of several factors in their admissions decisions. Recent court cases, however, have created uncertainty about the current viability of *Bakke*. The case of *Hopwood v. Texas* (1996) has contributed greatly to this confusion. In *Hopwood*, the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit found that the Equal Protection Clause prohibits universities from using racial preferences to obtain a diverse student body. A ruling in a similar Eleventh Circuit case, *Johnson v. Board of Regents* (2001), determined that diversity must derive from more than race and ethnicity. It is uncertain whether these rulings apply to the First and Second Circuits, the jurisdictions that cover New England colleges and universities.

Recent case law from the First and Second Circuits, however, provide some insight into the current legal environment for Affirmative Action at the postsecondary level in the

region. While two of these cases in particular—*Wessmann v. Gittens* (1998) and *Brewer v. West Irondequoit School Central School District* (2001)—involve selective admissions at the secondary level, *Bakke* frequently has been applied in similar cases. Given the similarities, the decisions in these cases are likely indicators of future legal decisions involving postsecondary education.

In *Wessmann v. Gittens* (1998), the admissions policies of the three examination schools (public, college preparatory secondary schools) under the Boston School Committee were challenged. The School Committee allocated half of the available seats in the entering class according to test scores and grade point averages. The other half was allocated based on the racial and ethnic proportions within the remaining pool of qualified applicants. The First Circuit Court's decision did not invalidate *Bakke*, as the Fifth Circuit had in the Hopwood case. The admissions policy was invalidated, however, as the proportional representation mechanism the three schools used violated *Bakke* by focusing only on racial and ethnic diversity.[19]

The Second Circuit's *Brewer v. West Irondequoit School Central School District* (2001) decision applies to Connecticut educational institutions. *Brewer* involved an urban-suburban interdistrict transfer program. Under this program, suburban White students transferred to urban schools and urban Minority students transferred to suburban schools. This policy was successfully challenged in district court by a White student who wanted to transfer to a suburban school from the urban school. The Second Circuit overturned the lower court's ruling in this case, determining that diversity can be a compelling government interest, a ruling that validates the *Bakke* decision and counters the Fifth Circuit's ruling on the *Hopwood* case.

While the current legal environment for Affirmative Admissions remains more favorable in New England than in those areas of the nation where high profile court cases have created an increasingly hostile environment, the future is uncertain. The next section reviews the perceptions of Affirmative Admissions in New England.

[19] This reasoning appears to be consistent with the more recent higher education decision in the *Johnson v. Board of Regents* (2001) case.

PERCEPTIONS OF AFFIRMATIVE ADMISSIONS IN NEW ENGLAND

The uncertain legal status of postsecondary admissions practices and policies has raised questions among practitioners and policymakers regarding Affirmative Admissions. Several findings emerged from the interviews with K-12 and postsecondary campus leaders and policymakers and the institutional survey regarding the perceptions of Affirmative Admissions. Foremost, the majority of interview respondents believed that challenges to Affirmative Action in admissions are more likely to be important elsewhere in the country than in New England. The issue of Affirmative Admissions in New England does not seem to be as high profile or as controversial as in some other regions. However, there are indications that Affirmative Admissions in New England may come under scrutiny in the future, just as cases in Georgia, Michigan, and Texas have sought to limit or deny the use of Affirmative Admissions policies.[20]

Within the region, leaders in Massachusetts public higher education seem most aware and concerned about the issue of Affirmative Admissions. In other states, however, and even within Massachusetts, some campus leaders do not view the challenges to Affirmative Admissions in other parts of the country as a threat that might spread to affect their own admissions processes. Some of these leaders primarily see Affirmative Admissions challenges as an opportunity to recruit students of color from neighboring regions. The institutional survey supports the qualitative data collected from interviews: only two institutions in New England believed that significant changes were made in the legal environment surrounding admissions policies at their institutions in the last five years.

However, the increasingly hostile legal environments elsewhere in the country may be subtly influencing institutional admissions policies in New England. While only two institutions in the survey indicated that the legal environment was responsible for changes in their admissions policies, a total of seven institutional respondents indicated that they had stopped using race as a criterion in their admissions decisions. These seven institutions represent less than 3 percent of the sample, but it is surprising that institutions are backing away from Affirmative Admissions without specific legal pressures to do so.[21]

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[20] Interviews with state leaders indicated that admissions records from Massachusetts have been sought under the Freedom of Information Act as the basis for a potential legal challenge to Affirmative Admissions.

[21] See Scanlon (1999), p.1. Such changes occurred after data was collected for this study. Therefore, conclusions drawn for the public flagship in Massachusetts, and likely in the Southern region too, may no longer represent current policy outcomes.

Many institutions in New England are looking for ways to diversify their campus enrollments without relying solely on racial/ethnic categories. Almost 20 percent of institutional survey respondents indicated that being a member of a Minority group had recently or soon would become more important as a factor in the admissions process. By comparison, 7 percent reported decreasing importance, but most institutions indicated no change in their admission policies in this regard in the last five years. Other criteria may be becoming more important to admissions offices as alternative means of diversifying new student cohorts on campuses. More than one out of every five respondents have started or are planning to place greater emphasis in admission decisions on "strivers"—students who have shown a capacity to overcome economic disadvantages. Eight percent are planning to increase the importance of being from urban areas as an admissions criterion and nearly 16 percent indicated that their institution has or is beginning to emphasize a student's ability to benefit from the education the college or university offers.

However, many campus leaders interviewed for this study have concerns about how well other types of measures will work as admissions criteria when trying to recruit a student body that is racially and ethnically diverse. Results from the survey shows that nearly two-thirds of the institutions in New England, recruiting a diverse student body is an institutional priority. These percentages are even higher for the four-year institutions alone: 85 percent of responding four-year institutions indicated that recruiting diverse students is an admissions priority.

THE NEED FOR AFFIRMATIVE ADMISSIONS

Campus leaders in all institutional segments across New England indicated that Affirmative Admissions are appropriate and necessary for recruiting diverse student bodies. Almost every person interviewed for this study indicated that the pool of qualified Minority students is too small. One chief enrollment officer noted: "We would love to have more Minority students. So would everyone else. We all want them and there just are not enough to go around." Another campus leader observed that, "We are not worried about being challenged about Affirmative Action; we cannot recruit enough Minority students for anyone to care or notice what we do. Right now it seems like it (a legal challenge to Affirmative Admissions) would be a nice problem to have." While survey respondents were mixed regarding changes in the difficulty of recruiting Minority students over the last five years, over one-third felt that there were not enough qualified Minority applicants. Approximately half of the respondents indicated that the environment for recruiting Minorities was becoming more competitive, prompting one interviewee to say, "Everyone wants the same kids; any Minority student with good marks is going to get lots of offers and he can only take one." Some leaders indicated that they were at a competative disadvantage in recruiting Minority students because other institutions were "lowering the bar." It was even suggested that quotas might still be in use on some campuses.

Despite short-term concerns, there is a general sense of optimism about the future of Minority enrollment pools given the increasing numbers of Minority students in the region

and throughout the country. Survey participants were confident that future demographic changes will lead to greater numbers of Minority students in secondary schools that will, in turn, translate into greater potential numbers of Minority undergraduate students in the near future. Table Two presents the current and anticipated percentages of these Minority students reported by the survey respondents. The table is stratified by region, public/private institution, and two-/four-year institution. Across all strata, survey respondents expected percentages of enrolled underrepresented Minorities to increase over the next five years. It will be difficult for all institutions to realize such expectations if persistence and graduation from secondary school and interest in higher education do not improve.

While many interview participants lamented the relatively shallow applicant pool for Minority students, others talked of higher education's responsibility to help cultivate higher levels of aspiration and academic preparation among students still in the K-12 system, thereby increasing the pool of students interested in higher education. Many institutions across the various segments are actively beginning to build linkages and bridges with K-12 schools and systems. These programs encompass a variety of methods, ranging from promoting earlier awareness of college in middle schools, to dual enrollments in high school and college, to bridge programs that provide first-hand opportunities to learn about college life and expectations. Educational leaders at both the K-12 and postsecondary levels spoke of the value of these programs, but emphasized that such efforts are generally embryonic and while seemingly effective to date on a small scale, a more widespread impact is needed in the region.

INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES FOR AFFIRMATIVE ADMISSIONS

Interviews with campus representatives revealed that there are large-scale differences among institution types with regard to the amount of resources available to support the admissions process. Campus leaders at private, more selective institutions acknowledged that they hold a competitive advantage in recruiting students, with perhaps the greatest advantage in recruiting academically talented Minority students because of the excellent financial resources at their disposal. These resources are used in mar-

The Pool of Minority Students and Changing Admissions Policies

The findings from this study confirmed that while many institutions have made commitments regarding the importance of race-sensitive admissions and diversifying incoming student groups, there is also a strong shift toward merit-based aid and higher traditional academic standards (e.g., SAT scores and grade point averages). Survey data suggest that large numbers of public and private colleges and universities are increasing academic requirements for admission, reducing or eliminating developmental education, and shifting greater levels of institutional resources into merit-based financial aid while de-emphasizing need-based aid even as tuition costs increase. The survey results indicate that half of all institutions in New England are in the process of raising traditional admissions standards and almost two-thirds of the institutions are increasing merit aid.

These trends suggest that while the overall enrollment pool of potential college students may be growing, and despite continuing support for Minority student diversity on campuses, college access for some is at risk of decreasing. The combination of increasingly rigorous admissions requirements, shifts in emphasis and resources from need-based to merit-based aid, rising college costs, and legal pressures on Affirmative Admission policies may make it increasingly difficult for students of color and for those from economically disadvantaged backgrounds to attend college.

Table Two: Current and Anticipated Percentages of Underrepresented Minority Students

Region	Public Two-year		Private Two-year		Public Four-Year		Private Four-Year		Total	
	Current	+5 Years	Current	+5 Years	Current	+5 Years	Current	+5 Years	Current	+5 Years
Southern Region	20.7	25.3	19.0	22.3	14.0	18.9	18.4	23.2	18.0	22.3
Central Region	21.6	27.4	37.5	41.2	13.1	16.8	16.39	19.7	18.6	22.3
Northern Region	3.23	4.9	7.40	11.6	3.3	5.1	6.50	10.4	8.27	11.7
TOTAL	**16.9**	**21.5**	**17.6**	**21.1**	**9.1**	**12.7**	**13.9**	**17.4**	**13.6**	**17.7**

Note: Data in Table Two are self-reported. However, after making their prediction of future minority enrollments, respondents were also asked to rate the confidence they had in their prediction using a three-point scale (low, medium, or high)—91 percent of the respondents rated their confidence in their prediction as medium or high.

keting and financial aid, and also allow for larger admissions staffs. The larger admissions staff at better-funded institutions is no trivial matter; it enables more selective institutions to spend more time reviewing applications and subsequently to consider a wider range of criteria for admission. Many enrollment management officers at less well-endowed private and public institutions expressed frustration over having to rely heavily on standardized test scores and grade point averages, but given the ratio of applications to personnel, they felt they had no other options. As one chief enrollment officer noted, "We get over 10,000 applications and we have to have an efficient way to get through them. It helps that we can say these are automatic cut-offs—you are in if you are above this line and you are out if you are below this other line. Then we screen everything in between. It probably means we leave out kids who could make it here despite their test scores, but we also end up admitting kids with good scores who do not do well. We just cannot go into that much detail for that many applications."

AFFIRMATIVE ADMISSIONS PRACTICES IN NEW ENGLAND

The interviews and surveys conducted for this study show that educational leaders feel that they are upholding the principles of Affirmative Admissions and their institutions are committed to diversity. This section describes the main ways that Affirmative Admissions occurs in New England, offering an assessment of how it is practiced across the region using student applications to four-year institutions.[22]

REDUCED THRESHOLD AFFIRMATIVE ADMISSIONS

The most basic concern of both opponents and proponents of Affirmative Admissions focuses on whether Affirmative Admissions represents a reduction of college standards, admitting Minority students with lower academic credentials than the minimum credentials required of White students, referred to hereafter as **reduced threshold admissions.** This section examines whether in the five years between 1995 and 1999 there has been any such reductions of standards in the four-year segments that allowed greater numbers of Minority students into college. In general, the public believes that this is what Affirmative Admissions means—Minority applicants are accepted for admission with lower levels of academic qualifications than are required for White students. The conclusion from the analysis of four-year segments, however, is very clear: *there is no significant evidence that colleges in New England have used reduced thresholds.*

To understand whether or not colleges used reduced threshold Affirmative Admissions standards for Minority student admissions, this study used regression techniques to first identify the factors within each segment that were related to decisions to admit White students who are, by definition, not subject to Affirmative Admissions considerations.[23] Then, using the same "acceptability" factors—that is, using non-Affirmative Admissions standards—the probability for Minority student acceptance is inferred. By definition, these must be non-Affirmative Admissions standards. Finally, by comparing actual acceptance of Minority students to their inferred probabilities of acceptance under non-Affirmative Admissions standards, it can be determined whether Minority students with "acceptability" factors below the non-Affirmative Admissions standards are actually admitted into any of the four-year segments. The results of these calculations are the actual incidences of reduced threshold Affirmative Admissions.

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[22] It is important to note that only four-year institutions are the focus of the analysis presented in this section. The region's public and private two-year segments are not included in this analysis as they frequently practice open admissions and are generally not as competitive in admissions as four-year institutions.

[23] Logistic regression was used because the dependent variable, acceptance, is a dichotomous variable (accepted or rejected).

Several variables available in the ASQ data were used to "explain" student acceptance including SAT scores, cumulative grade point averages (GPAs), parental income, in-state residence relevant to the college of application, and gender.[24] The results of regression analyses on White applicants show that across the segments, all of these variables are useful in terms of explaining their role in the admissions decision-making process. In particular:

- SAT scores and GPAs are the most significant elements in the admissions process within New England four-year segments—higher levels of SAT and GPA improve an applicant's chances of admission. The significance of SAT scores and GPAs is particularly strong among the private, more selective and public flagship segments.[25]
- The relationship of ability to pay, reflected in parental income, and student acceptability, varied by segment but largely was as expected: more positive in the private segments than in the public segments, as higher parental income allows students to meet the higher average tuition and fee levels in the private segments.[26]
- The expected relationship of residence in the same state as the college of application—generally negative in the private segments and positive in the public segments—reflects different motives in admissions among the various institutions: the public segments frequently serve local constituencies and the private segments seek greater diversity with regard to students' regions of origin. Therefore, in five of the six public four-year segments throughout the entire New England region, the "same-state" variable had a positive and significant influence, meaning that being a resident of the state positively influenced the admissions decision.[27]
- After considering SAT, GPA, parental income, and state of residence, applicants' gender has some marginal effect that is varied across the different segments. Females (who are attending higher education in increasing proportions compared to males) have higher acceptance probabilities in six of the 12 segments; for five of the remaining segments, there is no noticeable difference; only in the Southern private selective segment do males seem to have higher acceptance probabilities after considering the other listed factors.

The regression analysis reveals the importance of the five variables in institutional decision-making in terms of admissions for White students; the results can be used to explain

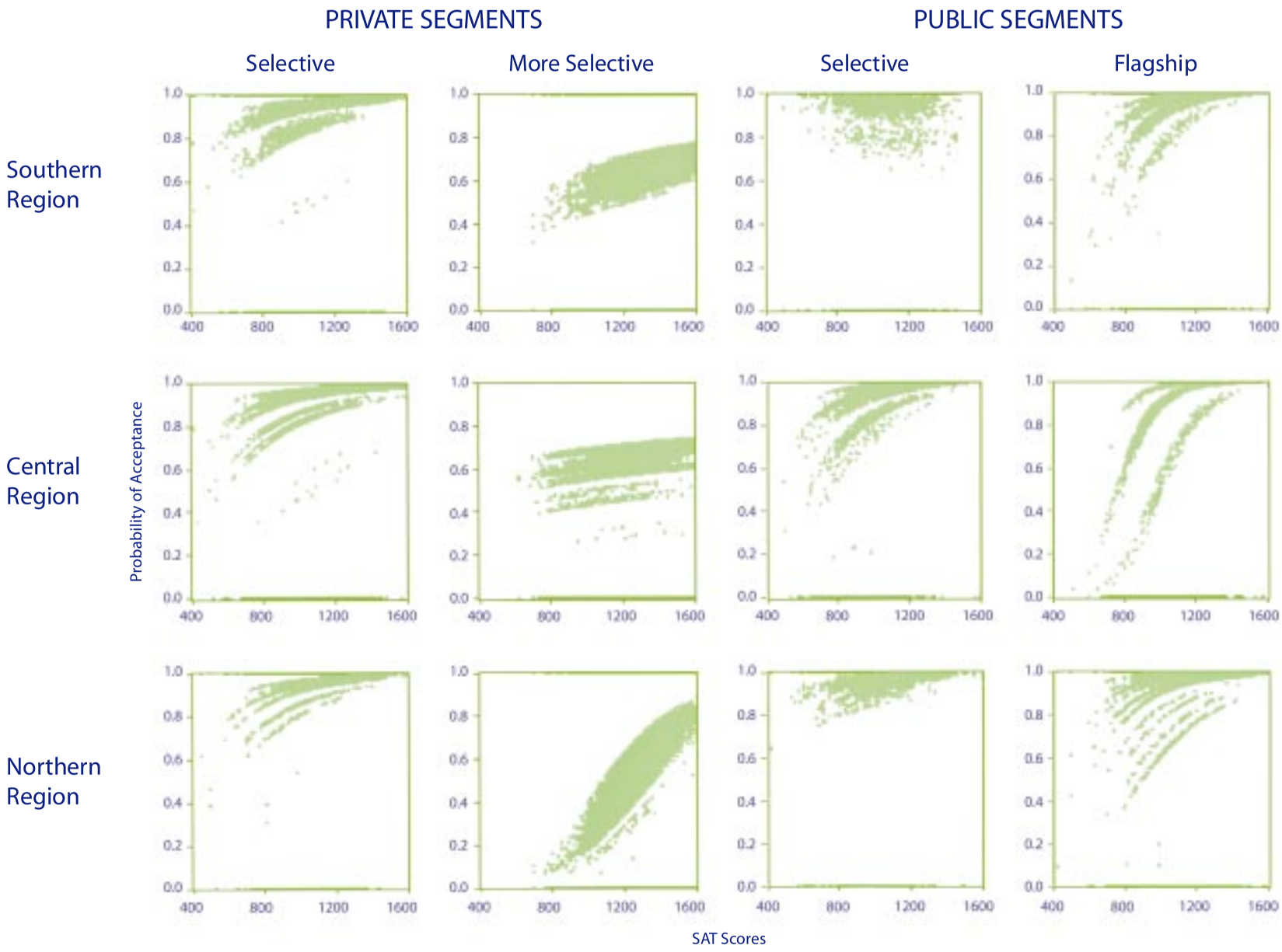
[24] Unquestionably, there are other variables that are considered by admissions officers in deliberation of applications. However, these variables were not included here as a result of current limitations of the ASQ data. Additional work is being conducted to overcome such limitations. The omission of these variables in this study may result in larger standard errors, but little bias is anticipated in the estimates presented here.

[25] The Southern public selective segment is the only exception. In this segment, the relationship of SAT and GPA with student acceptance was negative.

[26] The effect of this variable was positive and significant in three of the six private segments across the three New England regions. It was positive, but not significant in one additional private segment. It is negative but not significant in the Central private, more selective and Southern private selective segments, where it is presumed that financial aid makes up more of the difference between the ability to pay and the price of education. Among the public segments, parental income is positive and significant only in the Southern public and Northern public selective segments.

[27] The "same-state" variable was negative and significant in both of the Central private segments and in the Northern private selective segment. It was positive (and significant) only in the Southern and Northern private, more selective segments.

Figure Two: Forecasts of the Probability of Individual Admissions Acceptance by SAT Scores



and then predict the probability of acceptance for White students.[28] Figure Two[29] shows forecasts of the probabilities of admission for all students included in the database, reflecting the effect within each segment of SAT scores on the probability of acceptance for all White students included in the sample.[30] The figure is particularly instructive because it shows that there is a larger marginal effect[31] of increases in SAT scores for students applying to the public flagship segments than, for example, for those applying to the private, more selective segments.[32] Hence, methods used in this study produce results that demonstrate the tradeoffs that most assume occur between GPAs and SAT scores.

The stronger marginal effects of SAT scores that occur for the public flagship segments are consistent with findings from the interviews that public institutions with large enrollments often do not have as many resources to put into their admissions process as do many private institutions. As a result, these larger public institutions rely more heavily on standardized tests than on essays and other criteria idiosyncratic to individual applications. This analysis shows, among other things, that the private, more selective segments place relatively more emphasis on student cumulative GPAs and less emphasis on SAT test scores. This is consistent with the smaller marginal effect on an applicant's acceptance probability of a unit increase in SAT scores (flatter curves) associated with the Southern and Central private, more

Table Three: Forecasted Rejection of Admitted Minority Students Under Minimum Threshold Standards

Institutional Segment	# of Minority Students	% of Minority Students
Southern Private Selective	0	0%
Southern Private, More Selective	0	0%
Southern Public Selective	0	0%
Southern Public Flagship	0	0%
Central Private Selective	0	0%
Central Private, More Selective	0	0%
Central Public Selective	1	.18%
Central Public Flagship	1	.12%
Northern Private Selective	0	0%
Northern Private, More Selective	4	.15%
Northern Public Selective	0	0%
Northern Public Flagship	0	0%

[28] The result of logistic regression is an equation that represents the relationship between the "explanatory" factors and the dependent variable (whether the White applicant is accepted or not). The actual values of the explanatory factors for each application can then be inserted into the equation, leading to a probability of a specific outcome for the dependent variable, in this case the probability of acceptance for a specific student application.

[29] The explanatory (logistic) regressions that were used to produce the forecasts of probability of students being accepted in the segments to which they applied that are considered in this analysis can be found in Appendix C.

[30] This effect must be interpreted as the effect of holding the other four variables constant through the regression, hence collapsing a multi-dimensional concept into the two primary variables of interest shown in the figure.

[31] The "marginal effect" is defined here as the change in the probability of acceptance of a student when his/her SAT score changes by a small amount, holding other explanatory variables constant.

[32] Striations in these forecast bands reflect differences among students that cannot be shown in two dimensions, primarily in high school GPAs.

selective segments. (See Figure Two.) These might be compared with the much steeper curves for the Northern private, more selective and Central public flagship segments, where a unit increase in SAT scores has a large effect on an applicant's acceptibility.

Forecasts from the logistic regression used in this study produce probabilities of acceptance for students at institutions within the New England higher education segments. Using the probabilities of acceptance, a minimum threshold for White, non-Affirmative Admissions applicants who were actually accepted can be calculated for each segment. This minimum threshold represents a "cutoff" probability, at or above which the predicted probability of all accepted White students lies. Another way of saying this is that the cutoff is the lowest probability that was predicted for a White applicant who was actually accepted in a particular segment. Therefore, the minimum threshold simultaneously takes into account all of the characteristics used in the regression analysis.

Having forecast and determined the appropriate minimum threshold for White, non-Affirmative Admissions applicants, these thresholds were then applied to determine the likelihood of admission for the Minority cohorts applying to each of the segments. If the segments applied White, non-affirmative admission thresholds to their Minority applicants over the last five years, only three of the 12 four-year segments in New England would have denied admission to actually accepted Minority students. (See Table Three.) The numbers of Minority students in the sample that were hypothetically rejected using this minimum White (non-Affirmative Admissions) threshold are extremely small: in the Central public selective segment, only one student would have been rejected in the five years; in the Central public flagship segment, just one student would have been rejected; and in the Northern private, more selective segment, only four students would have been rejected.

Beyond Racial/Ethnic Diversity in the Admissions Decision-Making Process

While some institutions do not have clearly articulated admissions policies, most accept different students for many different reasons. Some applicants are accepted to lead their peers academically, while others are accepted to add diversity to the learning environment for their fellow students, representing the differences by geography, income, language, prior experience (first in a family to college, for example), artistic, athletic, and other abilities that each matriculant brings to college. Those diverse characteristics are ones that all students, later in life, are potentially presented with in their roles as employees, colleagues, leaders, neighbors and citizens. But such characteristics can be obtained from many different race/ethnicities—they need not be derived from only Minority students. This has been the point of the *Bakke* and *Johnson* decisions—diversity does not mean only differences in race and ethnicity. Nonetheless, racial and ethnic diversity remains an essential component of creating more broadly diverse campuses that better mirror American society.

Additional analysis was conducted with the threshold raised slightly, sufficient to reject 3 percent of White applicants, thereby excluding less qualified students who did not meet the higher threshold.[33] Applying these higher threshold conditions to the Minority cohort in each segment provides equally strong results. Only two segments, hypothetically, would reject more than 3 percent of the actually accepted Minority applicants under the higher

[33] This group might include some legacy holders (students whose family members are alumni of the institution), athletes, and others who might have been admitted for various reasons.

Table Four: Forecasted Rejection of Admitted Minority Students Under Raised Threshold Standards

Institutional Segment	# of Minority Students	% of Minority Students
Southern Private Selective	5	0.5%
Southern Private, More Selective	163	4.7%
Southern Public Selective	2	1.1%
Southern Public Flagships	0	0.0%
Central Private Selective	45	1.6%
Central Private, More Selective	57	0.6%
Central Public Selective	8	1.4%
Central Public Flagships	38	4.4%
Northern Private Selective	2	1.1%
Northern Private, More Selective	69	2.6%
Northern Public Selective	0	0.0%
Northern Public Flagships	2	0.5%

threshold. These are the Central public flagship segments, which would deny admission to 38 students (over 4 percent) of actually accepted Minorities under the higher cutoff, and the Southern private more selective segment, which would deny 163 students (nearly 5 percent) of actually accepted Minorities. (See Table Four.)

COMPARATIVE RATES OF ADMISSIONS FOR MINORITY AND WHITE STUDENTS

The previous section concluded that over the last five years, colleges and universities in New England have not accepted Minorities with weaker credentials than White, non-Affirmative Admissions applicants. Perhaps contrary to popular belief, admission of Minority students has *not* reduced standards within New England higher educational segments. This

Table Five: Acceptance Rates by Institutional Segments, Without Considering Credentials

Institutional Segment	White Acceptance Rates	Minority Acceptance Rates	Difference in Acceptance Rates
Southern Private Selective	68.6%	68.8%	0.2%
Southern Private, More Selective	29.9%	33.8%	**3.9%**
Southern Public Selective	62.0%	60.6%	-1.4%
Southern Public Flagship	74.3%	73.5%	-0.8%
Central Private Selective	73.4%	72.8%	**-0.6%**
Central Private, More Selective	39.5%	44.1%	**4.6%**
Central Public Selective	69.2%	68.1%	-1.1%
Central Public Flagship	76.7%	77.8%	**1.1%**
Northern Private Selective	66.5%	68.1%	**1.6%**
Northern Private, More Selective	33.7%	42.7%	9.0%
Northern Public Selective	78.8%	79.2%	0.4%
Northern Public Flagship	62.4%	62.3%	-0.1%

Note: **Green** indicates significance at the 95 percent confidence level.

section takes the analysis a step further by evaluating admissions outcomes for qualified Minority and White students in New England's four-year segments.[34] Given the increasingly complex admissions environment in which institutions are restricted from using race and ethnicity as admission criteria without considering a myriad of other factors, the question to be asked is: what are the comparative admissions rates for Minority and White students? While this does not address the Affirmative Admissions behavior of individual institutions, it is nonetheless the key question.[35] In this section, this question is examined both simply (without accounting for differences in SAT and GPA) and also in great detail (holding SAT and GPA constant).

Table Six: Acceptance Rates by Institutional Segments, Considering Credentials

Institutional S egment	Difference in Acceptance Rates
Southern Private Selective	-0.4%
Southern Private, More Selective	**2.3%**
Southern Public Selective	-0.4%
Southern Public Flagship	**1.6%**
Central Private Selective	-0.2%
Central Private, More Selective	**2.7%**
Central Public Selective	1.3%
Central Public Flagship	**7.6%**
Northern Private Selective	**1.8%**
Northern Private, More Selective	**9.3%**
Northern Public Selective	0.5%
Northern Public Flagship	0.5%

Note: **Green** indicates significance at the 95 percent confidence level.

Table Five shows acceptance rates without holding students' academic credentials constant. The findings suggest that different types of institutions throughout the region engage in a variety of strategic admissions processes that are sufficient to accept equitable numbers of Minority students in relation to the acceptance rates for White students. As expected from Bowen and Bok's work, the private, more selective segments have the highest differences in acceptance rates. Minority students are accepted at significantly higher rates than White students in four of the four-year segments: Southern private, more selective, Central private, more selective, Central public flagship, and Northern private selective. The Minority acceptance rate is significantly lower than the rate for White students only in the Central private selective segment. For all other four-year segments in New England, the differences in rates of acceptance for Minority and White students are not statistically significant.

More refined statistical testing takes into consideration the differences in SAT and GPA credentials presented by Minority and White applicants, which is of particular importance if Minority students have lower SAT scores and GPAs than White students. The results of more refined tests on the acceptance rate differences between Minority and White students reconfirmed the prior conclusions for the Southern private, more selective, Central private, more selective, Central public flagship, and Northern private selective segments—Minority students are accepted at a

[34] Data from The College Board's ASQ surveys are used once again for the analysis in this section; however, the data used in this section have been weighted to address the underrepresentation of non-accepted (rejected) applicants in the sample.

[35] It is important to keep in mind that in order to understand whether individual institutions are engaged in Affirmative Admissions, one needs to know both the institutional intent and the precise operation of admissions policy. The tests shown here can only determine whether after all admissions considerations have been made that the global goal of Affirmative Admissions is being met in New England. Are as high of a proportion of Minority students as White students being accepted and enrolling? These are important issues not to be lost in broadening realizations about the complexity of diversity.

Bowen and Bok's Findings from *The Shape of the River*

The Shape of the River by William Bowen and Derek Bok details the landmark study in which the authors—the former presidents of Princeton University and Harvard University, respectively—examine the nature and effects of race-sensitive admissions policies at private, more selective colleges and universities. The authors use extensive empirical data to demonstrate how merit and access can be complementary educational goals. Moreover, they demonstrate how the use of race-sensitive admissions to diversify campus enrollments at private, more selective institutions has short-term and long-term benefits for Minority and White students. *The Shape of the River* has quickly become one of the most influential studies on the topic of Affirmative Admissions, and through the use of empirical evidence, has raised the level of understanding and discussion about this important policy topic. However, Bowen and Bok's study only examines race-sensitive admissions and its outcomes at private more selective institutions; *Diversity Among Equals* extends this work by examining the state of Affirmative Admissions across the full range of four-year institutional segments in New England.

higher rate than White students. In addition, the differences in rate of acceptance in the Southern public flagship and Northern private more selective segments become significant—with minorities now being accepted at a higher rate than White students in the Southern public flagship and Northern private, more selective segments. In the Central private selective segment, the difference in acceptance rates is no longer significant. (See Table Six.)

These data on differences in acceptance rates for various ranges of SAT and GPA levels demonstrate that credentials do matter, but they also demonstrate the varying abilities within New England four-year segments to successfully recruit and retain Minority and White students from across the range of applicants' credentials. (See Figure Three.) The data show that *all* New England four-year segments use admissions strategies that accept Minority students at higher rates than White students over at least some specific portions of the range of their applicants' credentials. Consistent with the implication in Bowen and Bok, private, more selective institutions appear to engage most heavily in this practice across the full range of their applicants, but all of institutional segments also produce differential acceptance rates somewhere in the range of credentials presented to them.

As shown in Figure Three, the analysis reveals that:

- All three private, more selective segments in New England accept Minorities at higher rates than Whites across a wider spread of credentials than other segments do. Southern and Northern private, more selective segments place priority on accepting Minority students at higher rates than White students at lower levels of SAT without regard to levels of GPA. The Central private, more selective segment places priority on accepting Minority students at higher rates than White students at low GPA and mid-SAT levels.[36]
- The Southern public selective segment admits Minority students at higher rates than White students across upper SAT score ranges for all levels of grade point averages. The Northern public selective segment has a similar pattern, although there are fewer Minority applicants than in other regions. (See Figure Three.) The Central public selective segment appears to be the least engaged in accepting more Minority than White appli-

[36] Evaluating the differential effectiveness of these two strategies in terms of retention and graduation would be a useful topic for future research.

cants, but institutions in this segment accept higher percentages of Minority students with "B" averages and lower SAT scores.

- The Southern public flagship segment appears to accept higher proportions of Minority than White students primarily among credential ranges that include lower SATs and GPAs. Northern public flagships appear to be generally less engaged, but similar to flagship segments in the rest of New England, this segment accepts Minority students at a higher rate, especially at the lower end of SAT levels. This situation may arise because there are simply not enough Minority applicants in the Northern tier of New England and the private, more selective institutions are more likely to recruit Minority students with the highest SATs and GPAs.

The Issue of Minority Yield Rates

Institutions who admit qualified Minority students at higher rates than similar White students often cite the lower yield rates—the proportion of applicants who, once accepted, actually attend—of Minority students as one motivation for this practice. This is particularly true in New England given the intense competition for Minority students in the region. Unfortunately little data exists, specifically at the regional level, to allow an examination of Minority and White student yield rates.

Bowen and Bok took a unique approach to develop yield rates for Minority and White students by SAT score level. Using *College and Beyond* data pooled for five more selective institutions in 1989, they found lower yields for African American students for the full range of SAT combined scores above 1000, concluding: (Yield) "tends to be lower for highly qualified (Black) candidates than for comparable White candidates because the (Black) candidates are likely to be admitted by more schools."[37] Analysis conducted by MISER demonstrates that the number of SAT scores sent to colleges[38] anywhere by African American students is higher than White students for applicants to nine of the 12 four-year segments in New England. In Northern New England, across all segments, both African American and Hispanic students send more scores to colleges than do their White peers. To the extent that higher application rates reduce yield, this implies that yield may be lower across all of the four-year New England segments.

The conclusions that can be drawn from this analysis include that while the segments use seemingly different strategies, all four-year segments in New England produce nearly equal or higher rates of acceptance for Minority students in comparison to rates of acceptance for White students with similar SAT and GPA credentials. These are positive results, given that most institutions no longer look solely at race and ethnicity in implementing Affirmative Admissions goals. Six of the 12 segments—all three private, more selective segments, the Northern private selective segment, and the Southern and Central public flagship segments—actually accepted statistically higher proportions of Minority applicants.

The findings from this study show that institutions can work towards diversifying their campuses without sacrificing traditional notions of academic quality associated with lower thresholds. These findings and related implications are discussed in greater detail in the following section of the report.

[37] Bowen and Bok (1998), pp. 33-34.

[38] Scores sent by students represent a good approximation of student applications.

Figure Three: Test Results of Enhanced Rate Admissions in the Various Segments of New England Higher Education

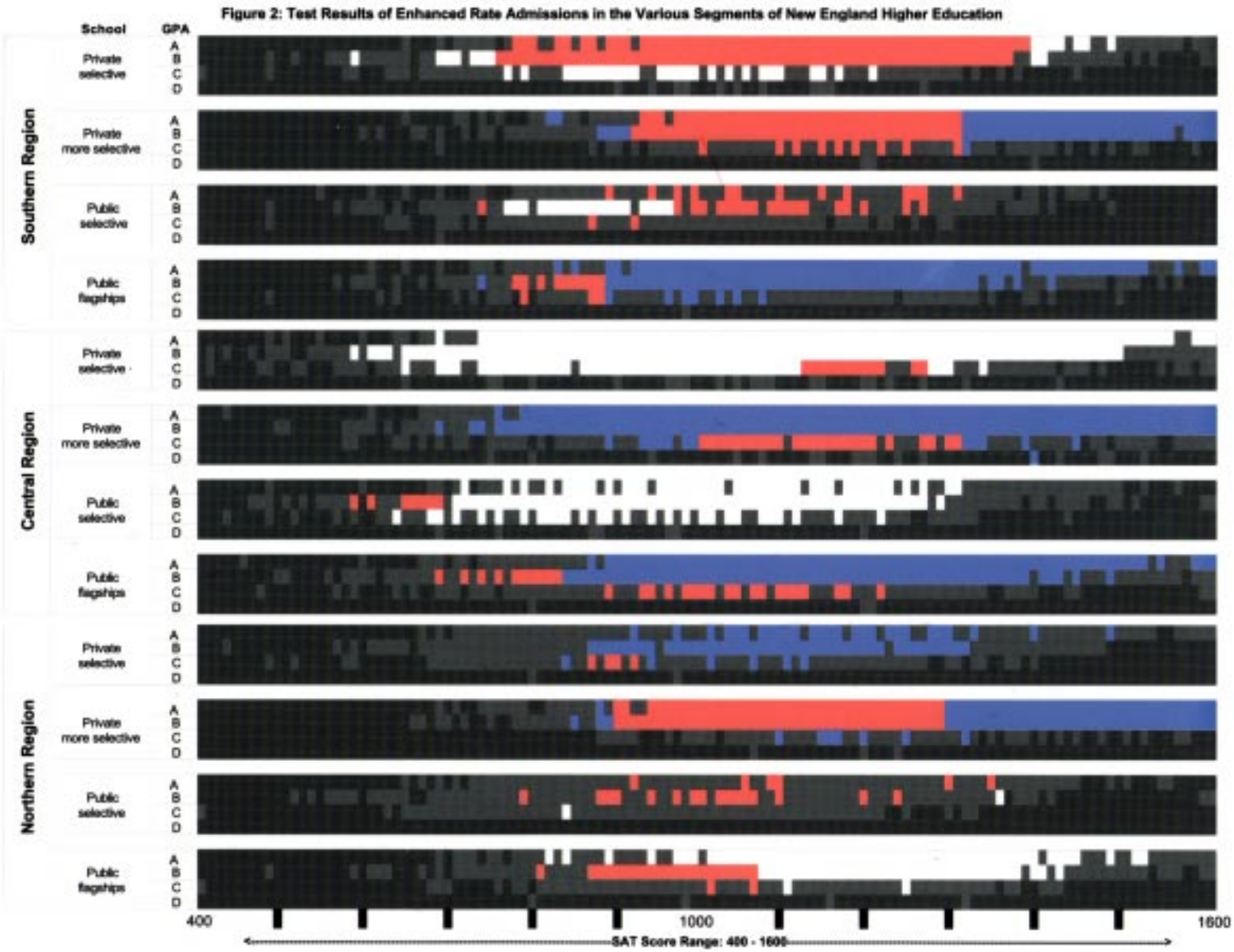


Figure Three displays all levels of SAT scores (horizontal axis) and GPAs (vertical axis) for the existence of:

- Zero applicants, meaning that in these segments there were no applicants at these levels (represented by all cells that are dark grey);
- Sufficient numbers of applicants to carry out analysis (represented by all cells that are not light or dark grey);
- Higher acceptance rates for Minority students than White students across all analyzable credential levels in these segments (represented by blue cells);
- Statistically equal Minority and White acceptance rates in these segments (represented by white cells); and
- Credential levels within a segment where there is the greatest significantly positive difference in acceptance rates for Minority students compared to White students (represented by pink cells superimposed on the blue and white backgrounds).

KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was conducted to provide a better understanding of the current status of Affirmative Admissions in New England. By reviewing both the perceptions of educational practitioners, leaders, and policymakers as well as the practices of institutions, the findings of this report are a guide for the region in its continuing efforts to increase the participation of underrepresented minorities in higher education.

KEY FINDINGS

Diversity Among Equals offers a comprehensive view of New England's evolving landscape of college opportunity. The key findings from this study are as follows:

Perceptions of Affirmative Admissions are not always consistent with the reality of college admissions in New England. It is a widely held perception that colleges and universities may lower college standards when engaging in the practice of Affirmative Admissions through "lowering the bar" in order to admit Minority students and diversify campus enrollments. The finding that reduced thresholds *are not* being used by New England institutions exemplifies how public perception about the state of Affirmative Admissions in New England is inconsistent with actual practice. The gap between perception and reality is not limited, however, to the general public. The results of the interviews and surveys with higher education officers and community members conducted for this study reveal differences between the general perceptions of many campus leaders and the reality of what is happening in the broader Affirmative Admissions environment. The gaps between perception and reality appear to occur in two main substantive areas:

- First, there is an inconsistency between the perceived legal environment and the actual status of the law in New England. Many of the nearly 100 campus leaders who were interviewed were unsure of how the high profile legal cases occurring elsewhere in the country and the recent cases in the First and Second Circuit Courts that have jurisdiction over New England affected their ability to use race as a criteria in the admissions process.
- Second, there is a gap between what campus leaders believe is happening at other institutions and what appears to be actually happening in New England. Some campus leaders indicated that they believed other institutions in New England may be using quotas and reducing admissions thresholds for Minority applicants—practices that were putting their own institutions at a competitive disadvantage. In contrast, this study provides

clear evidence that four-year segments in New England are not engaged in the practice of reduced admission thresholds for Minority students. The interviews and surveys also provided no evidence that any institutions in New England are currently using quotas as a means for admitting and enrolling Minority students.

From 1995 to 1999, New England four-year colleges and universities have not admitted Minority students who fail to meet minimum non-Affirmative Admissions standards. After applying minimum non-Affirmative Admissions thresholds to data on Minority applicants, there is little evidence that any of the four-year segments are actually accepting Minority students by reducing the thresholds for admission. Even when the threshold for testing current admissions practices for the existence of Affirmative Admissions is raised, there is still ample evidence that Minority students have not been admitted to New England colleges in greater proportions than White students through a reduced admissions threshold.

Minority students accepted at New England four-year institutions *are qualified* to attend these institutions. Much of the public rhetoric from opponents of Affirmative Admissions has focused on the argument that too many unqualified Minority students are getting into college. The argument includes propositions that such practices are unfair to both the Minority students who are admitted but are not able to meet the expected performance levels, and the White students who, proponents suppose, are more qualified but are denied the opportunity to enroll in college. The demonstrated absence of the use of reduced thresholds across the range of institutional segments is a clear indication that Minority students enrolled in New England colleges and universities are qualified and as likely as any other student to succeed in college.

All four-year segments in New England accept qualified Minority students at rates equal to or greater than those for White students, not just private, more selective institutions as suggested in previous research. Contrary to Bowen and Bok's premise (1998)—that Minorities are accepted at higher rates in any significant way primarily only in the private, more selective institutions—this study shows that Minority acceptance rates exceed White acceptance rates for a wide variety of institutional segments throughout New England. Private, more selective institutions appear to engage most heavily in the practice, but all four-year segments have higher Minority acceptance rates over some portion of their applicant pool. Such strategies are often used to compensate for the yield rate differences for Minority students compared to White students.

Most college and university leaders in New England believe in the importance of a diverse student body as an essential part of undergraduate education. The results of the surveys and interviews clearly indicate that campus leaders across a wide range of institutional types are committed to campus diversity and believe in the educational value of learning on diverse campuses. Eighty-five percent of survey respondents from four-year institutions in New England affirmed this belief and interviews with over 100 campus leaders throughout New England provided similar

evidence. Many campus leaders described the importance of preparing students to be better workers, citizens, leaders, and neighbors due to their undergraduate experiences in interacting, working, and socializing with a diverse group of peers.

Minority students continue to be underrepresented as a percentage of the undergraduate population in New England. Despite the use of enhanced rate admissions strategy, Minority students in New England are still less likely upon graduation from high school than their White peers to attend a four-year institution.[39] The high degree of competitiveness for Minority students identified by campus leaders in New England indicates that there is a desire and capacity for even greater numbers than are currently enrolled in the region's colleges and universities. In addition, lower yield rates for Minority students suggest that too many institutions are competing for too few Minority students. Therefore, it is logical to conclude that higher education has the capacity to enroll many more Minority students than it currently does. Furthermore, the results of the postsecondary survey show that all institutions in the region are anticipating enrolling more students, Minority and Whites, in the next five years.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

The policy implications of these findings for New England's postsecondary institutions are extensive. The following recommendations are particularly targeted on the activities and policies of colleges and universities:

New England's proud history of promoting educational access and diversity should serve as a foundation for providing unwavering support for Affirmative Admissions at the institutional and state levels. Previous studies [e.g., Bowen and Bok (1998); Kane, (1998)] have documented the extent to which the private, more selective institutions in New England and elsewhere in America actively have engaged in Affirmative Admissions as part of their commitment to developing and maintaining diverse campuses. Findings from this study suggest that a wide spectrum of colleges and universities in New England are effectively practicing enhanced rate admissions, admitting Minority students at higher rates of acceptance than White students. In the face of an uncertain legal environment, these colleges and universities should not shy away from Affirmative Admissions practices that promote diversity. They should continue to vigorously promote equity and access to higher education through the use of legally sound admissions policies and practices that create access for minorities and other under-represented groups of students.

Furthermore, institutions must commit to policies that will strengthen and improve the environment on campus, building on the success of Affirmative Admissions practices. Existing research on campus climates indicates that merely enrolling more Minority students

[39] Coelen (1993).

without paying attention to the broader campus climate for diversity often results in a less hospitable climate for Minority students and can breed resentment among White students [Hurtado et al. (1999); Smith et al. (1997)]. While the findings from this study demonstrate that there is widespread commitment to enrolling a diverse student body, the continued success of such efforts depends not only on effective recruiting and admissions practices, but also on the ability of institutions to articulate and provide support for the value of diversity as an integral part of the institutional mission and learning environment. Failure to do so may leave an institution more vulnerable to legal challenge while also resulting in a campus climate that may lead to decreased learning, satisfaction, and persistence among *all* types of students.

Colleges and universities in New England should work with policymakers and K-12 educators to increase the numbers of Minority students who aspire and are prepared to attend college and attain a degree. The continuing shortage of Minority students who currently meet the standards for admissions in all postsecondary educational sectors is a serious concern. While New England higher education is demonstrating an admirable capacity for serving academically qualified Minority students in the region and from around the country, it is clear that more needs to be accomplished in this area.

It is imperative that a higher percentage of Minority students in the K-12 system be better supported and prepared for participation in higher education, but the responsibility for meeting this important equity goal is widely shared. In addition to the K-12 system, parents, communities, and higher education institutions have responsibilities for investing in the region's and nation's most valuable resource—educated citizens. The results from the K-12 and postsecondary interviews indicate that there is growing recognition that higher education can and should do more, not just to recruit and compete for existing pools of students (Minority and otherwise), but to help to develop even larger pools of college-bound students. Efforts such as the GEAR UP program that encourage K-12 /higher education partnerships can have an effective impact on the development of larger pools of well-prepared Minority students. Students, institutions, and ultimately society as a whole will benefit from such efforts, as increased numbers of skilled college graduates will have been educated in diverse learning environments.

Postsecondary institutions in New England should clearly articulate what diversity means on their campuses and document how the benefits of diversity are valued as an integral part of their educational missions. The *Bakke* ruling still holds that Affirmative Admissions is an acceptable practice at institutions that demonstrate a compelling educational interest in having a racially and ethnically diverse student body. Colleges and universities must be able to demonstrate that their efforts to admit qualified Minority students at enhanced rates are part of larger campus commitments to diversity as a valuable part of the educational process at these institutions. Given the standards set in the *Bakke* decision, legal challenges are likely to be more successful if institutions cannot demonstrate that there is a compel-

ling educational interest in providing all students with an environment that is rich in diversity. Moreover, institutions that have clearly articulated and demonstrated such commitments proactively, rather than reactively in the face of pending legal challenges, are less likely to be the targets of such challenges and are more likely to be successful in discouraging lawsuits.[40]

Institutional affirmation of the commitment to diversity may have important external benefits for institutions as a proactive strategy to help shape the current and future legal policy environment. The involvement of higher education in the public debate about Affirmative Admissions has been largely defensive in response to recent legal challenges. It is apparent that many institutions have remained internally committed to Affirmative Admissions, but have kept a low public profile on the issue as a strategy for avoiding controversy and potential legal challenges. The widespread practice of admitting qualified Minority students at higher rates than White students documented in this study provides a context in which institutions can be more confident that they are not alone in such efforts.

Documenting Diversity in Research

Recent empirical studies (e.g., Chang, 2001; Milem, 2001) have documented the benefits of diversity that accrue to all students, not just Minority students. Such benefits are most likely to occur when diversity is incorporated into the campus environment in multiple ways that attend to curricular, historical, psychological, and behavioral components [Hurtado et al. (1999); Smith et al. (1997)]. The presence of a critical mass of diverse students on campus has been documented as an essential part of a truly diverse learning environment. The findings from these studies can be used by college and university leaders to strengthen their own commitments and efforts to provide diverse learning environments on campus.

Colleges and universities in New England should continue to seek many forms of diversity in their admissions processes. Institutions that believe in the benefits of diversity as an integral part of the educational process should look to maximize its benefits. The findings from the survey show that the institutions that believe themselves to be most successful in recruiting a diverse student body—generally private, more selective institutions—also tend to nurture diversity in many forms. For example, these institutions indicated that in addition to valuing racial/ethnic diversity as an admission criterion, they also emphasize factors such as ability to benefit, socioeconomic diversity, and geographic diversity, both in terms of urban/non-urban location and from various parts of the nation and world.

It is important to reiterate that greater focus on wider definitions of diversity does not mean that colleges and universities should look for other forms of diversity in place of racial/ethnic diversity. Rather, this recommendation focuses on enhancing current commitments to creating more racially/ethnically diverse campuses by broadening the scope of diverse students in other ways.

Colleges and universities in New England should use multiple criteria in the admission process. It is logical that the use of multiple criteria would help promote diversity and fairness when

[40] Green (2000).

making admissions decisions. The private, more selective institutions in this study are most actively engaged in Affirmative Admissions and consider the widest range of criteria when making admissions decisions. It is important to note, however, that the more selective private institutions tend to use more criteria *in addition to* race, not instead of race. This is an important distinction, particularly given the efforts in some states (e.g., California, Texas, and Washington) to develop alternative criteria that replaces race as an admission criterion. The move toward purely race-neutral admissions criteria has initially suppressed the representation of Minority students in the public institutions in these states (Kane, 1998; Koretz, et al., 2001). Some states that have moved toward a plan of specific percentage of Minority admissions run the risk of actually reducing thresholds for Minority students from high schools that do not provide adequate support in preparing students to achieve on SATs and other forms of standardized assessment.

The use of multiple criteria, even when race is included, may provide institutions with some measure of protection against legal challenges to institutional Affirmative Admissions practices. The extent to which institutions can demonstrate that they are engaged in practices that are attempting to diversify their campuses in broad ways further reinforces an institution's stance that diversity is an essential part of the educational mission of the institution. This strategy can help institutions show that other factors relate to student success besides traditional measures of academic achievement.

Colleges and universities in New England need to invest adequate resources in the admissions and enrollment management process. The recruitment and admissions process in higher education is a demanding business. Marketing an institution, recruiting students, reviewing applications and awarding institutional aid are all resource- and labor-intensive activities. Institutions that can invest more resources in these activities have a competitive advantage over institutions that cannot. The disparity in resources among the institutional segments appears to play a role in an institution's ability to recruit students in general and more specifically in their ability to recruit higher ability and Minority students.

The status of private, more selective private institutions as the most actively engaged in Affirmative Admissions may be reflective in part of their ability to invest more resources into the admissions process. While there is no denying that Affirmative Admissions efforts also rest largely on an institution's commitment to diversity, it is beneficial to have greater resources in order to make those commitments a reality. It is unreasonable to expect that other institutions can match the resources of the highly endowed private institutions, but other institutions may want to examine how much they invest in such activities and how efficiently they use available resources.

In order to achieve institutional diversity goals, colleges and universities in New England should conduct analyses and assessments of their own admission policies and practices. Given the

gap between perception and reality, colleges and universities need to continue to develop their own internal sources of information. Such knowledge can address the perception gap on campus and can be used to proactively educate others outside of the institution about the state of Affirmative Admissions on campus. The methods used in this study can be applied to institutional data as well as to larger databases and could be beneficial as colleges and universities work to improve their ability to attract and enroll a diverse cohort of new students.

Given the complexity of issues surrounding Affirmative Admissions, educational leaders in New England need more information about the current parameters of and potential future legal challenges to Affirmative Admissions. The dynamic nature of the policy environment, the complex nature of laws that apply to Affirmative Admissions, and the varied interpretation of Affirmative Admission across different judicial circuits makes it difficult for campus leaders to keep track of the current legal status of Affirmative Admissions as it applies to their particular institutions and circumstances. The varying messages and perspectives often over-played in the media typically add to this confusion. Therefore, more information about the current legal status of Affirmative Admissions would be helpful to campus leaders as they strive to achieve diversity goals on campus.

There are many misconceptions and a general lack of knowledge about the legal parameters of Affirmative Action as it applies to the college admissions process. Indeed, the results from the interview portions of this study show that most campus leaders are not well-informed as they would like to be on the policy and legal environment surrounding Affirmative Admissions. The forecast modeling portion of this study shows that institutions have not lowered thresholds for Minority students, yet the survey results from this study suggest that some institutions are de-emphasizing race as a criterion in the admissions process. The de-emphasis of race as an admissions criterion may indicate a retreat from Affirmative Admissions or a shift towards the use of other criteria (e.g., urbanicity, striver status) in addition to race/ethnicity as a means for enrolling a diverse student body. If policy changes reflect a retreat, this is a cause for concern regarding equitable opportunities for postsecondary access in New England for all students. If policy changes instead reflect a shift toward broader definitions, then institutions should carefully examine the impact such internal policy shifts may have on their own student enrollment structures.

The interview data gathered for this study also show that there are misconceptions about what is happening at other campuses and across the various institutional segments. Some of these misconceptions have been derived from existing research and literature on the topic that have largely focused on private, more selective private institutions as the primary venues for Affirmative Admissions activity. As a result, many leaders and educators within the postsecondary sector do not realize how frequently academically qualified Minority students are admitted at higher rates than their White peers across all segments, nor do they realize the virtual absence of the reduction of thresholds across New England.

Most importantly, campus leaders should be resolute about the ways in which institutional admissions policies are designed and practiced on campus. Campus leaders need to be aware that Affirmative Admissions, when practiced within legally acceptable parameters, is the law of the land. Knowledge of those parameters is essential for institutional decision-makers as they work to promote diversity, access, and fairness in the admissions process. Such knowledge provides institutions with the widest possible range of admissions strategies while providing security against legal challenges that could undermine institutional missions and autonomy.

CONCLUSION

Diversity Among Equals identifies widespread use of enhanced admission rates for Minority students across multiple postsecondary segments in New England. The findings from this study build upon and extend the work of Bowen and Bok (1998), showing that Affirmative Admissions is not limited to private more selective institutions only. Additionally, there is little evidence of lowered thresholds for Minority students in the New England region. Taken together, these findings demonstrate that institutions can successfully work to diversify their campus without lowering thresholds.

From a policy perspective, this study reinforces concerns that there are not enough resources being directed at preparing Minority students to access a higher education in New England. Despite the obvious shortages of Minority students in existing enrollment pools, no evidence was found in this study that colleges and universities in New England have lowered the traditional academic qualifications bar required for admittance into college.

The findings from this study challenge traditional notions of Affirmative Admissions and indicate the need to change perceptions about Affirmative Admissions so that they more closely resemble reality. While it is clear that New England has much to be proud of regarding the commitment of institutions to diversify their campus enrollments, this report also suggests that greater efforts are yet needed to increase access and opportunity for Minority students in New England. The many positive findings from this study can and should serve as a call to action that builds on the effective policies that already exists in New England higher education. In the long run, this work by committed educators and campus leaders will result in the end of Affirmative Admissions; an end that will come not from legal challenges to this important policy, but from the achievement of true educational equity in which all students, regardless of race, have been provided the support and means to aspire and achieve the dream of a college education.

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APPENDIX A:
Details of the Construction of a Selectivity Index

Since each institution receives applications from many of the same students in pairwise comparisons of common applicants between institutional pairs, the exponential of the ratio of the numbers of the common set of applicants accepted by the two schools should be proportional to the selectivity indices of the two schools:

$$\exp(n_i/n_j) = \exp(\gamma)\, S_i/S_j \exp(\varepsilon_{ij})$$

wherein: n_i and n_j are the numbers of accepted common applicants in schools i and j; γ is a factor of proportionality; S_i and S_j are unknown selectivity indices of the two schools, i and j; and ε_{ij} is a normally distributed random error indicating that judgments about students is done imperfectly, at best, by admissions officers.

Ordering institutions on a basis such as alphabetically;[41] simple substitution of relative values of selectivity indices expressed as the product of the initial institution's arbitrarily chosen (numeraire) selectivity value and a sequence of relative ratios between adjoining pairs of institutions; and adding a padded set of all of the relativity ratios $r_{\propto,\propto+1}$, raised to powers, as appropriate, of 0 or 1—depending whether or not the $r_{\propto,\propto+1}$ appropriately occur for any given pair of institutions,[42] turns this into a regression analysis:

$$\exp(n_i/n_j) = \prod_{\alpha=1}^{j} r_{\alpha,\,a+1}{}^{1} \Big/ \prod_{\alpha=1}^{i} r_{\alpha,\,a+1}{}^{1} \exp(\varepsilon_{ij}) \quad , j > i$$

And by taking logs of both sides and canceling common terms raised to common exponents:

$$n_j/n_j = \gamma + \sum_{\alpha=1}^{i} r_{\alpha,\,a+1}{}^{0} + \sum_{\alpha=i+1}^{j} r_{\alpha,\,a+1}{}^{1} + \sum_{\alpha=j+1}^{N} r_{\alpha,\,a+1}{}^{0} + \varepsilon_{ij} \quad , j > i$$

It is a good quality of this formulation that the institution that takes more of the common set of applicants will tend to be associated with a smaller selectivity index, whether this be on account of priorities of geographic preference for origin of students, legacy, or other deviation from quality-first strategies. The overlapping of sets of shared students among

[41] Coelen (1980) shows that differential ordering leaves the computed index unchanged; therefore, alphabetical ordering is taken as a matter of convenience.

[42] That is whether: $i < \propto < j$.

pairs of institutions, tends to allow all institutions to be ranked consistently, so that if n_a/n_b tends to define the selectivity of institution b relative to a, then n_c/n_b tends to define not only the selectivity of institution c relative to b but also, by simultaneous consideration of all observations in a multiple regression, it also defines institution c relative to a.

APPENDIX B:
Institutions Included in the Study

SOUTHERN REGION: CONNECTICUT AND RHODE ISLAND

Southern Private Two-Year Institutions

CODE*	NAME
3121	BRIARWOOD COLLEGE
3104	BRIDGEPORT HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF NURSING
3470	GIBBS COLLEGE
3615	INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE OF HOSPITALITY MANAGEMENT
3476	KATHARINE GIBBS SCHOOL, RHODE ISLAND
3528	MITCHELL COLLEGE
3797	SAINT JOSEPHS HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF NURSING, RHODE ISLAND
3789	SAINT VINCENTS COLLEGE

Southern Public Two-Year Institutions

CODE	NAME
3656	ASNUNTUCK COMMUNITY-TECHNICAL COLLEGE
3421	CAPITAL COMMUNITY TECHNICAL COLLEGE - WOODLAND CAMPUS
3733	COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF RHODE ISLAND
3425	GATEWAY COMMUNITY-TECHNICAL COLLEGE
3446	HOUSATONIC COMMUNITY-TECHNICAL COLLEGE
3544	MANCHESTER COMMUNITY-TECHNICAL COLLEGE
3551	MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY TECHNICAL COLLEGE
3550	NAUGATUCK VALLEY COMMUNITY TECHNICAL COLLEGE
3652	NORTHWESTERN CONNECTICUT COMMUNITY COLLEGE
3677	NORWALK COMMUNITY TECHNICAL COLLEGE
3716	QUINEBAUG VALLEY COMMUNITY-TECHNICAL COLLEGE
3558	THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY TECHNICAL COLLEGE
3897	TUNXIS COMMUNITY-TECHNICAL COLLEGE

*Codes are the institutional codes used by the College Board.

Southern Private Selective Four-Year Institutions

CODE	NAME
3001	ALBERTUS MAGNUS COLLEGE
3093	BRIDGEPORT ENGINEERING INSTITUTE FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY
3095	BRYANT COLLEGE
3390	FAIRFIELD UNIVERSITY
3431	HARTFORD COLLEGE FOR WOMEN
3465	JOHNSON AND WALES UNIVERSITY
1791	LYME ACADEMY OF FINE ARTS
3539	MORSE SCHOOL BUSINESS
3699	PAIER COLLEGE OF ART
3693	PROVIDENCE COLLEGE
3712	QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY
3729	ROGER WILLIAMS UNIVERSITY
3780	SACRED HEART UNIVERSITY
3750	SAINT BASILS COLLEGE
3754	SAINT JOSEPH COLLEGE, CONNECTICUT
3758	SAINT THOMAS SEMINARY OF HARTFORD
3759	SALVE REGINA UNIVERSITY
3698	TEIKYO POST UNIVERSITY
3914	UNIVERSITY OF BRIDGEPORT
3436	UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD
3663	UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAVEN

Southern Private, More Selective Four-Year Institutions

CODE	NAME
3284	CONNECTICUT COLLEGE
3094	BROWN UNIVERSITY
3726	RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL OF DESIGN
3899	TRINITY COLLEGE
3959	WESLEYAN UNIVERSITY
3987	YALE UNIVERSITY

Southern Public Selective Institutions

CODE	NAME
3898	CENTRAL CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
3966	EASTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
3724	RHODE ISLAND COLLEGE
3662	SOUTHERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY
5807	UNITED STATES COAST GUARD ACADEMY
3350	WESTERN CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITY

Southern Public Flagship Institutions

CODE	NAME
3915	UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT
3919	UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

CENTRAL REGION: MASSACHUSETTS

Central Private Two-Year Institutions

CODE	NAME
3011	AQUINAS COLLEGE MILTON, MASSACHUSETTS
3013	AQUINAS COLLEGE NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS
3120	BAY STATE COLLEGE
3787	BAYSTATE MEDICAL CENTER SCHOOL OF NURSING
3112	BROCKTON HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF NURSING
3352	DEAN COLLEGE
3371	EAST COAST AERO TECH SCHOOL
3391	FISHER COLLEGE
3392	FORSYTH SCHOOL OF DENTAL HYGIENE
3394	FRANKLIN INSTITUTE, BOSTON
2699	ITT TECHNICAL INSTITUTE FRAMINGHAM
3473	KATHERINE GIBBS SCHOOL, MASSACHUSETTS
3287	LABOURE COLLEGE
3488	LAWRENCE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF NURSING
3489	LEOMINSTER HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF NURSING
9100	MARIAN COURT COLLEGE
3636	MASSACHUSETTS COMMUNICATIONS COLLEGE
3376	NEW ENGLAND BANKING INSTITUTE
3713	QUINCY COLLEGE
3773	SAINT ELIZABETHS HOSPITAL SCHOOL OF NURSING, MASSACHUSETTS
3630	URBAN COLLEGE OF BOSTON

Central Public Two-Year Institutions

CODE	NAME
3102	BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
3110	BRISTOL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
3123	BUNKER HILL COMMUNITY COLLEGE
3289	CAPE COD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
3420	GREENFIELD COMMUNITY COLLEGE
3437	HOLYOKE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
3294	MASSACHUSETTS BAY COMMUNITY COLLEGE

3549	MASSASOIT COMMUNITY COLLEGE
3554	MIDDLESEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE, MASSACHUSETTS
3545	MOUNT WACHUSETT COMMUNITY COLLEGE
3651	NORTH SHORE COMMUNITY COLLEGE
3674	NORTHERN ESSEX COMMUNITY COLLEGE
3714	QUINSIGAMOND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
3740	ROXBURY COMMUNITY COLLEGE
3791	SPRINGFIELD TECHNICAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Central Private Selective, Four-Year Institutions

CODE	NAME
3002	AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL COLLEGE
3005	ANNA MARIA COLLEGE
3777	ART INSTITUTE OF BOSTON
3009	ASSUMPTION COLLEGE
3010	ATLANTIC UNION COLLEGE
3075	BABSON COLLEGE
3078	BAY PATH COLLEGE
3482	BECKER COLLEGE LEICESTER
3079	BECKER COLLEGE WORCESTER
3096	BENTLEY COLLEGE
1168	BOSTON ARCHITECTURAL CENTER
3091	BRADFORD COLLEGE
3612	CAMBRIDGE COLLEGE
3279	CLARK UNIVERSITY
3285	CURRY COLLEGE
3365	EASTERN NAZARENE COLLEGE
3283	ELMS COLLEGE
3367	EMERSON COLLEGE
3368	EMMANUEL COLLEGE
3369	ENDICOTT COLLEGE
2824	FRANKLIN W OLIN COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
3417	GORDON COLLEGE, MASSACHUSETTS
3447	HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE
3435	HEBREW COLLEGE
3449	HELLENIC COLLEGE
3481	LASELL COLLEGE
3483	LESLEY COLLEGE
3467	LONGY SCHOOL OF MUSIC
3512	MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF PHARMACY AND ALLIED HEALTH
3525	MERRIMACK COLLEGE
9101	MONTSERRAT COLLEGE OF ART
3530	MOUNT IDA COLLEGE

3511	NEW ENGLAND COLLEGE OF OPTOMETRY
3639	NEWBURY COLLEGE
3666	NICHOLS COLLEGE
3667	NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
3689	PINE MANOR COLLEGE
3723	REGIS COLLEGE, MASSACHUSETTS
3772	SAINT HYACINTH COLLEGE AND SEMINARY
3295	SAINT JOHNS SEMINARY COLLEGE, MASSACHUSETTS
3794	SCHOOL OF THE MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS
3761	SIMMONS COLLEGE
3795	SIMONS ROCK COLLEGE OF BARD
3763	SPRINGFIELD COLLEGE, MASSACHUSETTS
3771	SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY
3958	WENTWORTH INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
3962	WESTERN NEW ENGLAND COLLEGE
3963	WHEATON COLLEGE
3964	WHEELOCK COLLEGE
3969	WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

Central Private More Selective Four-Year Institutions

CODE	NAME
3003	AMHERST COLLEGE
3107	BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC
3083	BOSTON COLLEGE
3084	BOSTON CONSERVATORY
3087	BOSTON UNIVERSITY
3092	BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
3282	COLLEGE OF THE HOLY CROSS
3434	HARVARD UNDERGRADUATE ADMISSIONS
3514	MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
3529	MOUNT HOLYOKE COLLEGE
3659	NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC
3762	SMITH COLLEGE
3770	STONEHILL COLLEGE
3901	TUFTS UNIVERSITY
3957	WELLESLEY COLLEGE
3965	WILLIAMS COLLEGE

Central Public Selective Institutions

CODE	NAME
3517	BRIDGEWATER STATE COLLEGE
3518	FITCHBURG STATE COLLEGE
3519	FRAMINGHAM STATE COLLEGE
3516	MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF ART
3521	MASSACHUSETTS COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
3515	MASSACHUSETTS MARITIME ACADEMY
3522	SALEM STATE COLLEGE
3924	UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON
3786	UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS DARTMOUTH
3911	UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS LOWELL
3523	WESTFIELD STATE COLLEGE
3524	WORCESTER STATE COLLEGE

Central Public Flagship Institution

CODE	NAME
3917	UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AMHERST

NORTHERN REGION: MAINE, NEW HAMPSHIRE, AND VERMONT

Northern Private Two-Year Institutions

CODE	NAME
3700	CASCO BAY COLLEGE
3302	CENTRAL MAINE MEDICAL CENTER SCHOOL OF NURSING
3291	CHAMPLAIN COLLEGE
3452	HESSER COLLEGE
3553	MCINTOSH COLLEGE
3747	MID-STATE COLLEGE AUBURN
3306	MID-STATE COLLEGE AUGUSTA
3405	NEW ENGLAND CULINARY INSTITUTE MONTPELIER
3100	NEW ENGLAND CULINARY INSTITUTE ESSEX
3101	NEW ENGLAND SCHOOL OF COMMUNICATIONS
3752	STERLING COLLEGE,VERMONT
3977	WHITE PINES COLLEGE
2600	WOODBURY COLLEGE

Northern Public Two-Year Institutions

CODE	NAME
3309	CENTRAL MAINE VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE
3286	COMMUNITY COLLEGE OF VERMONT
3372	EASTERN MAINE TECHNICAL COLLEGE
3475	KENNEBEC VALLEY TECHNICAL COLLEGE
3646	NEW HAMPSHIRE COMMUNITY TECHNICAL COLLEGE BERLIN
3684	NEW HAMPSHIRE COMMUNITY TECHNICAL COLLEGE CLAREMONT
3850	NEW HAMPSHIRE COMMUNITY TECHNICAL COLLEGE LACONIA
3643	NEW HAMPSHIRE COMMUNITY TECHNICAL COLLEGE NASHUA
3661	NEW HAMPSHIRE COMMUNITY TECHNICAL COLLEGE STRATHAM
3660	NEW HAMPSHIRE COMMUNITY TECNICAL COLLEGE MANCHESTER
3647	NEW HAMPSHIRE TECHNICAL INSTITUTE
3631	NORTHERN MAINE TECHNICAL COLLEGE
3535	SOUTHERN MAINE VOCATIONAL TECHNICAL INSTITUTE
3941	VERMONT TECHNICAL COLLEGE
3961	WASHINGTON COUNTY TECHNICAL COLLEGE
3990	YORK COUNTY TECHNICAL COLLEGE

Northern Private Selective Four-Year Institutions

CODE	NAME
3080	BENNINGTON COLLEGE
1119	BURLINGTON COLLEGE
3281	COLBY-SAWYER COLLEGE
3297	COLLEGE OF SAINT JOSEPHS, VERMONT
3648	DANIEL WEBSTER COLLEGE
3395	FRANKLIN PIERCE COLLEGE
3418	GREEN MOUNTAIN COLLEGE
3440	HUSSON COLLEGE
3562	MAGDALEN COLLEGE
3701	MAINE COLLEGE OF ART
3509	MARLBORO COLLEGE
3657	NEW ENGLAND COLLEGE
3649	NEW HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE
3669	NORWICH UNIVERSITY
3670	NOTRE DAME COLLEGE, NEW HAMPSHIRE
3728	RIVIER COLLEGE
3748	SAINT ANSELM COLLEGE
3755	SAINT JOSEPHS COLLEGE, MAINE
3757	SAINT MICHAELS COLLEGE, VERMONT
3796	SOUTHERN VERMONT COLLEGE
3903	THOMAS COLLEGE, MAINE

3892	THOMAS MORE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
3900	TRINITY COLLEGE, VERMONT
3925	UNITY COLLEGE
3751	UNIVESITY OF NEW ENGLAND

Northern Private More Selective Four-Year Institutions

CODE	NAME
3076	BATES COLLEGE
3089	BOWDOIN COLLEGE
3280	COLBY COLLEGE
3305	COLLEGE OF THE ATLANTIC
3351	DARTMOUTH COLLEGE
3416	GODDARD COLLEGE
3526	MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE

Northern Public Selective Institutions

CODE	NAME
3765	CASTLETON STATE COLLEGE
3766	JOHNSON STATE COLLEGE
3472	KEENE STATE COLLEGE
3767	LYNDON STATE COLLEGE
3505	MAINE MARITIME ACADEMY
3690	PLYMOUTH STATE COLLEGE
3929	UNIVERSITY OF MAINE AUGUSTA
3506	UNIVERSITY OF MAINE FARMINGTON
3393	UNIVERSITY OF MAINE FORT KENT
3956	UNIVERSITY OF MAINE MACHIAS
3008	UNIVERSITY OF MAINE PRESQUE ISLE
2094	UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE MANCHESTER
3691	UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN MAINE

Northern Public Flagship Institutions

CODE	NAME
3916	UNIVERSITY OF MAINE ORONO
3918	UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE DURHAM
3920	UNIVERSITY OF VERMONT

APPENDIX C:
Logistic Regression Results

The following table reports the estimated coefficients and standard errors of the logistic regressions run on the dependent variable, acceptance in institution to which application was made. This variable was coded as 1 if acceptance was granted and 0 if acceptance was denied. This table reflects regressions computed on data that was not weighted to represent differences between sample variation from institutional reported acceptance rates. The researchers do not anticipate that the results contain bias because the data was used without weighting. This is the subject of a forthcoming technical paper by the researchers. Further, this issue, together with a related one—"missing variable bias," is being investigated with an amplified database recently made available to the researchers from the College Board. The results will be reported separately.

Table C-One: Coefficients of Admission Decision Logistic Regressions by Segment

		PRIVATE SELECTIVE		PRIV.MORE SELECTIVE		PUBLIC SELECTIVE		PUBLIC FLAGSHIP	
SOUTHERN REGION	**Variable**	**Coefficient**	**Std. Err.**	**Coefficient**	**Std. Err.**	**Coefficient**	**Std. Err.**	**Coefficient**	**Std. Err.**
	Constant	-12.965	1.611	-10.3	1.07	-5.881	6.367	-41.29	3.849
	Log of SAT[1]	2.298	0.235	1.099	0.154	-1.36	0.909	5.542	0.564
	Log of GPA[2]	2.314	0.175	0.431	0.117	0.911	0.644	2.764	0.393
	Log of PY[3]	-0.253	0.057	0.198	0.117	0.278	0.175	0.197	0.091
	Male (=1)	0.087	0.071	0.276	0.223	-0.851	0.215	-0.173	0.124
	Same State (=1)	0.035	0.093	*0.087*	0.045	1.532	0.199	0.962	0.133
	McFadden R^2	0.054		0.01		0.098		0.1396	
CENTRAL REGION	**Variable**	**Coefficient**	**Std. Err.**	**Coefficient**	**Std. Err.**	**Coefficient**	**Std. Err.**	**Coefficient**	**Std. Err.**
	Constant	-17.439	1.262	-3.85	0.534	-28.375	2.556	-61.184	3.648
	Log of SAT[1]	2.532	0.183	0.477	0.077	3.789	0.364	8.227	0.511
	Log of GPA[2]	2.447	0.13	1.15	0.066	3.358	0.274	5.065	0.371
	Log of PY[3]	0.011	0.04	*-0.021*	0.012	0.098	0.082	0.079	0.086
	Male (=1)	-0.347	0.053	-0.196	0.016	-0.207	0.105	-0.233	0.11
	Same State (=1)	-0.125	0.053	-0.078	0.018	0.56	0.144	*0.213*	0.118
	McFadden R^2	0.068		0.008		0.132		0.255	
NORTHERN REGION	**Variable**	**Coefficient**	**Std. Err.**	**Coefficient**	**Std. Err.**	**Coefficient**	**Std. Err.**	**Coefficient**	**Std. Err.**
	Constant	-19.159	2.495	-39.707	0.974	-14.11	4.595	-29.911	2.52
	Log of SAT[1]	2.762	0.369	5.021	0.136	1.512	0.657	4.105	0.359
	Log of GPA[2]	2.335	0.264	1.593	0.096	2.342	0.493	4.186	0.272
	Log of PY[3]	0.019	0.083	0.169	0.018	0.376	0.143	-0.047	0.063
	Male (=1)	0.057	0.109	0.007	0.024	-0.07	0.189	-0.349	0.084
	Same State (=1)	-0.367	0.131	0.343	0.046	-0.055	0.188	0.776	0.116
	McFadden R^2	0.059		0.055		0.045		0.127	

NOTES:

[1] The natural logarithm of College Board's re-centered, total score on English and mathematics.

[2] The natural logarithm of student applicants' cumulative, secondary grade point average.

[3] The natural logarithm of the income of student applicants' parents.

Coefficients significant at the 95 percent level of confidence are in bold and colored green.

Coefficients significant at the 90 percent level of confidence are in italics and colored green.