



Diversity Obsession

A common feature of our time is the extent to which many in our nation have become preoccupied with diversity. But true diversity obsession, almost a mania, is found at our institutions of higher learning. Rather than have a knee-jerk response for or against diversity, I think we should ask just what is diversity and whether it's a good thing. How do we tell whether a college, a department or another unit within a college is diverse or not? What exemptions from diversity are permitted?



Seeing as college presidents and provosts are the main diversity pushers, we might start with their vision of diversity. Ask your average college president or provost whether he even bothers promoting political diversity among faculty. I'll guarantee that if he is honest — and even bothers to answer the question — he will say no. According to a recent study, [professors who are registered Democrats outnumber their Republican counterparts by a 12-1 ratio](#). In some departments, such as history, Democratic professors outnumber their Republican counterparts by a 33-1 ratio.

The fact is that when college presidents and their diversity coterie talk about diversity, they're talking mostly about pleasing mixtures of race. Years ago, they called their agenda affirmative action, racial preferences or racial quotas. Not only did these terms fall out of favor but also voters approved initiatives banning choosing by race. Courts found some of the choosing by race unconstitutional. That meant that the race people had to repackage their agenda. That repackaging became known as diversity. Some race people were bold enough to argue that "diversity" produces educational benefits to all students, including white students. Nobody has bothered to scientifically establish what those benefits are. For example, does a racially diverse student body lead to higher scores on graduate admissions tests, such as the GRE, LSAT and MCAT? By the way, Israel, Japan and South Korea are among the world's least racially diverse nations. In terms of academic achievement, their students run circles around diversity-crazed Americans.

There is one area of college life where administrators demonstrate utter contempt for diversity, and that's in sports. It is by no means unusual to watch a Saturday afternoon college basketball game and see that the starting five on both teams are black. White players, not to mention Asian players, are underrepresented. Similar underrepresentation is practiced in college football. Where you find whites overrepresented in both sports is on the cheerleading squads, which are mostly composed of white women. If you were to explore this lack of racial diversity in sports with a college president, he might answer, "We look for the best players, and it so happens that blacks dominate." I would totally agree but ask him whether the same policy of choosing the best applies to the college's admissions policy. Of course, the honest answer would be a flat-out no.

The most important issue related to college diversity obsession is what happens to black students. Black parents should not allow their sons and daughters to fall victim to the diversity hustle, even if the diversity hustler is a black official of the college. Black parents should not allow their sons and daughters to attend a college where they would not be admitted if they were white. A good rule of thumb is not to allow your children to attend a college where their SAT score is 200 or more points below the average of that college. Keep in mind that students are not qualified or unqualified in any



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absolute sense. There are more than 4,800 colleges — a college for most anybody. The bottom-line question for black parents and black people in general is: Which is better, a black student's being admitted to an elite college and winding up in the bottom of his class or flunking out or being admitted to a less prestigious college and performing just as well as his white peers and graduating? I would opt for the latter. You might ask, "Williams, but how will the nation's elite colleges fulfill their racial diversity needs?" My answer is that's their problem.

Walter E. Williams is a professor of economics at George Mason University. To find out more about Walter E. Williams and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate webpage at www.creators.com.

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