not qualify for admission under this plan.

The three-judge panel of the Court of Appeals in a 2–1 decision upheld UT Austin's use of race as one factor among many in its holistic admissions review. Justice Patrick E. Higginbotham summed it up as follows: "We are persuaded that to deny UT Austin its limited use of race in its search for holistic diversity would hobble the riches of the educational experience in contradiction of the plain teachings of *Bakke* and *Grutter*." Ms. Fisher has appealed this determination and the Supreme Court has agreed to hear the appeal.

At the same time, a recent survey of 338 nonprofit four-year public and private institutions conducted by the American Council on Education found that 68% of the institutions surveyed are still considering race as one factor among many in a holistic review process. However, only eleven of the thirty-five more selective public institutions outside of states where affirmation action is banned responded to the survey. The significant number of institutions that still consider race in a holistic admissions review will undoubtedly need to reexamine current practices to ensure that these criteria are in alignment with judicial requirements.

Concrete Recommendations for Practice

The outcome of the *Fisher* appeal will affect department chairs in their efforts to enhance the access of diverse students to academic programs as well as in realizing the educational benefits of diversity for all students through diverse classroom interactions, intergroup learning, and curricular approaches. Two major takeaways from the *Fisher* decision are that context matters and that institutions of higher education need to clearly articulate their diversity goals in mission and vision statements and strategic planning documents. These documents can include college and school mission statements, department goals, and programmatic objectives. Because no two universities or colleges are alike, diversity goals will differ based on mission, geographic location, historical legacy, campus racial climate, curricular focus, the composition of the student body, and other factors.

As department chairs identify, assess, and articulate the need for diversity in academic programs and expected learning outcomes, these documented objectives will substantiate and solidify the institution's overall rationale for diversity. For example, linking diversity learning outcomes in the undergraduate general education program to preparation of students for citizenship in a diverse, global society provides a strong argument for enhancing diversity experiences. Other avenues for substantiating diversity progress and goals can include analysis of the number of underrepresented students in certain fields of study such as the STEM fields and efforts to remedy the imbalance of minoritized students.

In our new book, *Affirmative Action at a Crossroads: Fisher and Forward* (Jossey-Bass 2015), we highlight several actionable practices that have, to date, survived legal scrutiny. These strategies have not yet been challenged and can still be used to enhance the access, persistence, and success of diverse students. They include:

- Need-based financial aid initiatives as well as recruitment, outreach, and support systems that target economically and educationally disadvantaged students
- Scholarships based on socioeconomic or first-generation status as well as privately funded scholarships designed to enhance diversity
- Collaborative agreements that provide academic pathways for diverse students such as the Diversity and Innovation in the Geosciences program in Texas in which thirty-five universities recruit students for college-level geosciences
- Early outreach programs that link with guidance counselors in diverse public school districts and increase college readiness
- Transfer programs from community colleges that draw on geographic diversity
- Cohort programs that orient students to recruitment, financial aid, and admissions in small groups

It is clear that department chairs are critical in helping students realize the educational benefits of diversity through curricular offerings, classroom environments, the hiring of diverse faculty, pedagogical approaches, and inclusive department climates. As chairs promote the access of diverse students to higher education and prepare students for future careers in a diverse democracy, their collaborative work with faculty aligns with institutional diversity strategy and is instrumental in the creation of an integrated ecosystem for diversity. ▲

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Culturally Competent Mentoring: The Chair's Role Toward a Culturally Responsive Culture in Support of American Indian and Native Alaskan Students

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American Indian/Native Alaskan (AI/NA) students are the most underrepresented racial or ethnic student population in higher education. (The term American Indian/Native Alaskan is used throughout this article to include American Indian, Indian, Alaska

Native, and Native American identifiers to refer to members of tribal nations and communities within the United States.) Their underrepresentation is present at all levels: enrollment, persistence, and graduation. In terms of graduation rates, one study found that only 39% of AI/NA students graduated in 2012 from four-year institutions, compared to 60% of white students (Knapp, Kelly-Reid, and Ginder 2012). Rates of degree attainment appear to be affected by drop out, as only 12% of AI/AN students had a bachelor's degree among 25–34 year-old young adults compared to 37% of white students despite similar application rates (Ross et al. 2012). Although increasing enrollment and graduation rates of AI/NA students have been a primary goal among several constituencies, AI/NA students' enrollment and graduation rates have remained the same or declined in most western states.

AI/NA students are also underrepresented at the graduate school level, particularly within STEM fields. AI/NA students are almost absent from graduate programs when compared to all other ethnic and racial groups, and the low representation of AI/NA students within graduate education has a direct relationship to the low numbers of AI/NA faculty in higher education.

For department chairs to successfully support AI/NA students, mentoring must be envisioned and nurtured to encompass the mentor's willingness to be flexible and to adapt his or her understanding of mentoring based on the student's cultural diversity. In other words, chairs play a critical role in fostering a culturally responsive culture in support of AI/NA students when they encourage cultural competencies within mentoring.

In Support of AI/NA Students

The support of AI/NA students starts with building intentionally meaningful, mutually beneficial relationships between faculty advisors/mentors and student advisees/mentees that take into account the diverse values and contributions of the students' cultural histories, identities, communities, and cultures.

Indigenous knowledge is a product of knowledge-practice-belief systems that adhere to a process of *coming to know* (CHiXapkaid and Inglebret 2007). For knowledge to be genuine it must occur in a relationship of mutual respect and reciprocity—a process that runs counter to traditional (European-American) views that rely on mentors and advisors to hold knowledge that they transmit to their students. Mentoring must recognize ways of knowing that are reciprocal.

Advising. Traditionally, the primary purpose of academic advising is to assist students in developing meaningful educational plans that are compatible with career goals and institutional policies. In *prescriptive* advising a student follows the advice of an advisor and problems are solved or averted. *Developmental* advising is a cooperative engagement in a sequence of developmental tasks that, when successfully completed, lead to learning by both the advisor and advisee.

Mentoring. Mentoring, on the other hand, is advocacy, by a mentor on behalf of a student (sometimes referred to as a protégé), and involves career socialization, inspiration, and belief in one another as well as promoting excellence and passion for work through guidance, protection, support, and networking. It involves an interest in one another as human beings as well as supporting professional practice.

Regardless of a student's cultural identity, if mentoring is rooted in a mutually beneficial relationship for the faculty advisor/mentor and student advisee/mentee by intentionally taking into account the diverse values and contributions of that student's cultural history, identity, community, and culture, then mentoring/advising should not be a monolithic process.

For AI/NA students in particular, mentoring is best when shaped to meet the specific and diverse needs of students and their mentors. Unfortunately, most academic programs lack vigorous mentoring cultures where students and faculty simultaneously benefit from the process. Compounding this situation, faculty do not always have the competencies or the training needed to effectively mentor any student, and, in particular, students from dissimilar backgrounds.

Mentoring, Advising, and Developing Cultural Competencies

Successfully advising and mentoring all students, particularly AI/NA students, requires department chairs to promote best practices for mentors to harness the diverse values and contributions of AI/NA students' cultural identities. This understanding of cultural competencies within mentoring, centering the student's cultural knowledge within the reciprocal relationship of mentoring, may seem new and different to faculty as mentors, but for AI/NA students, this process of "mentoring" can be culturally and historically understood as a process that is complex and inclusive of their cultural backgrounds. For example, this might include students sharing relevant customs, skills, spiritual practices, and languages so that faculty mentors can understand how they are embedded in a larger cultural framework of family, community, and elders. For AI/NA students, emulating mentors in the community leads to learning roles appropriate for specific times and places. In contrast to European-American cultural values, within American Indian communities, there is immense respect given to individuals and individual differences. Faculty mentors should incorporate this value as a component of successfully mentoring AI/NA students.

Promoting the Best within Mentoring

The reciprocal relationship required of mentoring involves the student's cultural knowledge as much as it requires the mentor's willingness to engage with cultural competence. Successfully mentoring AI/NA students requires department chairs to promote best practices to harness the diverse values and contributions of AI/NA students' cultural histories, identities, communities, and cultures. The following considerations are offered in an effort to promote cultural competencies to identify the best mentoring practices for all, particularly AI/NA students.

Understand the complex histories and relationships of AI/NA students.

- AI/NA students come from one of the 562 tribal communities, each of which is characterized by unique cultures, values, and languages. However, academic environments tend to group these students into one monolithic student population.
- Native communities employ a structured system for educating their youth. This system, based on generations of accrued wisdom (Hall 2007), is a complex experiential process that

includes learning by doing, observing, listening, and experimenting under the considerate mentorship of elders and extended family members. Customs, skills, spiritual practices, and languages are effectively conveyed to serve community-established priorities.

- Cultural resilience is crucial. AI/NA students are navigating two worlds. It is the obligation of the mentor to engage mentees in discourse while being aware and respectful of diverse cultural behaviors. Successful mentoring entails working with students on how to navigate relationships with faculty, supervisors, and peers by increasing their awareness of cultural protocols that influence power and authority and clarifying the cultural norms and expectations in academia.

Support dynamic cultural values and traditions.

- A core value of AI/NA students is their embeddedness in a cultural identity that is partially manifest by the need to "give back" to their families, tribes, and communities; a value that usually overrides the drive for individual fame and success that is more characteristic of European-American cultural values (CHiXapkaid and Inglebret 2007).
- Become agents of change by supporting this need for "giving back to Native peoples." Mentors can engage in community-based service to tribal schools and communities and include Tribal Elders and others to educate nontribal community members about ancestral knowledge and heritage, thus helping students serve as professional role models for Native communities.
- Mentoring AI/NA students calls for a broad view that includes working academically and socioculturally and dealing with spiritual, mental, and physical well-being as well as homesickness.

Create department communities that are welcoming, inclusive, and acknowledge the unique backgrounds of AI/NA students.

- Foster a family-like or community-based college-going ethic that strongly influences students by instilling in them the expectations that they will attend and finish college. Mentoring must start with youth mentoring, academic mentoring, and workplace mentoring that is designed to instill the expectations of college attendance and consistently communicating this with parents and other significant people in their lives.
- Sincerely connect with all aspects of AI/NA students' lives. AI/NA students possess an interdependent representation of self and thrive best with the direct support, awareness, and permission of the community. This can be reinforced by academic mentors attending ceremonies and events as appropriate, learning the language, visiting tribal colleges, and learning Native ways (to the extent possible as outsiders; but avoiding tribal politics) to appreciate Native communities' values and cultural practices.
- Develop relationships built on trust, which requires understanding and incorporating student perspectives and awareness of divergent cultures to create common goals for academic partnerships.

Provide leadership for culturally competent mentoring.

- Bring Native voices into the educational dialogue and encourage students to draw and share inspiration from ancestral experiences.
- Create educational opportunities that respect cultural identities, ancestral knowledge, and tribal sovereignty and self-determination.
- Build a welcoming university environment that infuses the values of community, family, and collaboration as integral elements of the program.
- Provide undergraduate research and community (tribal) outreach opportunities as major elements preceding graduate recruitment and mentoring programs.
- Create a vigorous mentoring culture on campus in which students, staff, and faculty are all learners. Academic mentoring programs cannot exist in a vacuum; they are nestled within several student support programs (counseling, learning centers, and tutoring services) that must also develop and practice these multicultural competencies and interests.
- Create bridging programs as well as internship, outreach, and research opportunities that provide preparation for university, professional, and community (tribal) involvement.
- Because many will be struggling to integrate identities that are potentially in opposition to one another, provide opportunities to engage in discussions of personal and professional identity.
- Encompass student success as three components that must be central to all recruiting and mentoring programs: program enrollment, transitioning in, and returning to serve AI/NA culture/community (CHiXapkaid and Inglebret 2007).

Conclusion

This article was created in support of AI/NA students who must successfully navigate many worlds in their pursuit of higher education. At the intersection of AI/NA students and effective mentoring, it was also written to support department chairs in their leadership toward a more culturally responsive academic mentoring environment that takes into account many needs, particularly students who come from dynamic cultures and identities rooted in ancestral knowledge, traditional values, tribal sovereignty, and self-determination. ▲

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