

### **Affirmative Action**

Affirmative action is a very controversial topic. In a New York Times article by Linda Greenhouse on April 1, 2003, affirmative action is once again found to be a topic of heated discussion. In this latest round of controversy, the University of Michigan is defending its admissions process for undergraduate education. This case is of national significance, because it is being held in front of the Supreme Court. Furthermore, its outcome could potentially affect the admissions process of institutions across the country, including MIT.

According to reports, the University of Michigan gives underrepresented minorities a significant advantage in gaining admission. They use a 150 point system to rank all freshmen applicants. According to the report, blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans are given an automatic 20 points merely for their race. To many, this practice is creating an implicit quota in their admissions process. The university's admissions process has raised a number of questions. A university must decide what is more important: diversity or a uniform admissions policy. Supporters for either are justified in their decision. Diversity is important; people from different backgrounds and cultures provide one another with education that extends beyond the classroom. However, it does not make sense that a person should be given advantages for their ethnic background. The reasons are two-fold. First, such a practice can be seen as reverse discrimination. Second, minorities who have deservedly gained admission will be viewed as results of affirmative action rather than hard work and intellect.

The solution to this problem, in my mind, is not one that is easy to achieve. Institutions should not wait until college admission to make up for the lack of diversity in higher-educational institutions. This disparity should be addressed at the elementary and high school level. Black and Hispanic kids do not underachieve in schools because they are not as smart as their white counterparts. Their schools underprovided for them. On average, they do not have the same resources as their counterparts. As a result, when it comes to college admissions, many of these minorities must be given favor over their white counterparts. If they aren't given some sort of consideration, many would fail to get into the top academic institutions.

The objectives of affirmative action could be accomplished without the controversy. If governments and legislation gave under funded schools more money, the need for affirmative action may be avoided. By giving minority schools more funding, black and Hispanic students would be given the opportunity to achieve at the levels of their white counterparts. In turn, the controversy accompanying affirmative action would be averted. Instead of having to give minorities an unfair advantage, colleges could admit them solely on their credentials. There would be no need to give a black or Hispanic student a 20 point bonus for being a minority; no need for affirmative action; no need for controversy. The diversity that affirmative action strives to create would be established with no resentment from others in the community. In turn, all the benefits of affirmative action would be present, without the controversy and ill will.