

# **Alternative Access Strategies: An Analysis of University Outreach in the Context of Anti-Affirmative Action Policies**

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## Abstract

This study addresses the pressure faced by universities to maintain standards of excellence while addressing a broader social problem – the unequal access to and preparation for higher education among low-income and minority students. Historically, institutions have relied on admissions policies that target disadvantaged students. Since the prohibition of affirmative action in admissions policies in several states, affected universities have had to develop and implement new strategies to increase access of under represented students. A case study of one large US research university illustrates the institution is altering its K-12 outreach efforts to address issues of access for minority students in unique and progressive ways.

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*“We have much less success in creating the diversity that we wish to see in our student body and that’s where our greatest problem lies.” (Dean of Undergraduate Admissions,)*

Driven by a commitment to diversity and access, predominately white colleges and universities (PWCUs) have established a number of strategies to increase the enrollment of underrepresented minority students. The most successful has been the use of affirmative action in admissions (Bowen & Bok, 1998; Nettles, Perna, & Edelin Freeman, 1999; Orfield, 1998).

While affirmative action has proven to be a successful policy for increasing access, the practice has sparked debate since its inception (Bullington & Ponterotto, 1990). Affirmative action opponents worked through the courts and public referenda to eliminate the use of race as a factor in university admissions. Lawsuits against the University of Maryland (1994) and the University of Texas School of Law (1996) initiated the legal challenges. Success in these states motivated additional challenges against the Universities of Washington, Michigan and most recently decided against the University of Georgia. Referenda in California and Washington have eliminated the use of race as a factor in admissions. In 1999, Florida Governor Jeb Bush proposed the elimination of affirmative action in college and university admissions, and the ban was implemented the following year.

Recent research has presented a snapshot of the impact of these policies on state institutions or systems (Heller, 2001; Hurtado & Wathington Cade, 2001; Pusser, 2001). The research reveals declines in minority enrollment in Texas (Chapa, 1999), California (Rice, 1999), and Washington (Wierzbicki & Hirschman, 2001) following the elimination of race-sensitive policies. Without exception, enrollment of African American, Mexican American and Native American students at the flagship institutions in Texas, California, and Washington declined precipitously (Heller, 2001).

Institutions have sought alternatives to affirmative action in order to respond to the elimination of race sensitive polices and the decline of minority student enrollment. Responses have included redesigning admissions processes, adopting more aggressive minority student recruiting practices, and implementing or improving K-12 and community outreach efforts. Of these alternative strategies, K-12 outreach has emerged as the most promising and least controversial response to declining minority enrollment. Such outreach efforts address the most significant problems arising from the elimination of affirmative action policies: (1) prospective minority students’ perception of a hostile racial climate and (2) academic under preparedness resulting from the inequities in K-12 education. Growing attention to outreach as a solution for declining minority enrollment and the subsequent reallocation of limited resources creates a need for research that can inform the organization and evaluation of institutional outreach efforts. This study examines the case of one institution’s efforts to increase access through outreach.

### Review of Literature.

The conceptual framework for this study combined two bodies of literature--access and organizational theory--to explore the ways in which institutions limited by anti affirmative action

policies have utilized outreach efforts to target minority students. Research that examines college access and K-12 outreach provided a conceptual foundation for our inquiry. Organizational theories – crisis management and strategic planning, and organizational culture and leadership – provided the framework for analysis of institutional outreach as an access strategy.

Increasing access has been a concern for higher education institutions since WWII. Prompted by pragmatic and moral responses to the demands of the Civil Rights movement, concern for minority student access became an issue for higher education in the mid 1960's (Bowen & Bok, 1998). Subsequently, colleges and universities embraced “race-as-a-factor” admissions policies as the primary response to demands for increased minority access to PWCUs. Institutions justified these race sensitive admissions criteria with theories of remedying past injustice, increasing diversity among the student body, and providing equal educational opportunity (Bowen & Bok, 1998, p. 7).

Educational research has provided additional justifications for increasing minority student access to PWCUs. College access literature has suggested that increasing minority access has important individual, institutional and societal benefits. At the individual level, post-secondary education has traditionally been associated with social and economic mobility, greater life satisfaction, and higher levels of political participation (Bowen, 1977; Bowen & Bok, 1998). At the institutional level, increased racial and ethnic diversity at PWCUs has been linked to improvements in the educational experience of all students (Hurtado, 1999; Gurin, 1999). Researchers have also suggested that college attendance increases employment rates and consequently increases the tax revenues that support local economies (Bowen, 1977). Finally, increased diversity has been connected to democratic aims such as increased political participation and higher levels of civic engagement among college students (Bowen & Bok, 1998).

Opponents of affirmative action have argued that the policies demoralize Black students (Selingo, 2000); lower expectations of Black students' academic ability (McWhorter, 2000); and stigmatize affirmative action beneficiaries (Thernstrom & Thernstrom, 1997). Arguing that affirmative action programs actually harm the intended minority student beneficiaries, critics of affirmative action have worked to prohibit colleges and universities from using race sensitive admissions criteria.

Recognizing the importance of minority student access, institutions established outreach policies to complement affirmative action admissions policies. Outreach programs generally garner broad public support because these programs benefit minority students, the institutions, and the community (Berry, 2000). Outreach initiatives serve students' needs by enhancing the quality of education, eliminating the boundaries between college and high school, and giving students hope to pursue college (Martin, 1999). As an access strategy, outreach programs benefit the institution by furthering the institutions' access and diversity goals (Gladieux, 1996; Terkla & Pagano, 1993) consistent with public consensus (Berry, 2000). The public endorses the community benefits of providing equal opportunity for higher education - - stemming the “brain drains” of talented minority students who may otherwise have looked outside the state for more “welcoming” campus environments. Further, outreach promotes hardworking students on an essentially color-blind basis (Berry, 2000; Martin, 1999).

Educational literature has identified numerous forms of outreach with missions ranging from improving students' academic preparation (Gladieux, 1996) to improving the institution's “organizational image” (Terkla & Pagano, 1993). To be effective for increasing access for urban youth, in particular, programs must be comprehensive (Davidson, 1996; Oesterreich, 2000) with

funding sufficient to support long-term intervention (Fenske, Geranios, Keller, & Moore, 1997; Martin, 1999). Successful programs combine social and academic support for students with community and parental/guardian collaboration (Davidson, 1996; Mathematica, 1998). Access requires significant intervention on the part of colleges and universities.

External prompting for college and university intervention to ameliorate inequities in K-12 education requires organizational adaptation (Cameron, 2000; Richardson & Skinner, 1990). Historically, colleges and universities have resisted responding to “problems that are not of its own making” (Bok, 1982, p. 301). Organizational missions, historically internally oriented, (Rowley, 2000) perceive the distress of urban education to be such a problem. As a result, higher education institutions have played a nominal role in addressing these concerns. Heightened criticism of public institutions’ non-responsiveness to this issue (Scott, 1998) and the demands for equity in higher education access have elevated public concerns to institutional priorities in recent years (Schmiedtlein & Taylor, 1999). Organization theory addressing the strategy and structure particular to the dynamics of institutional outreach to minority students inform the conceptual framework for analyzing this institution’s use of outreach as a strategy for increasing minority students’ access.

In terms of strategy, a key challenge prompting the use of minority outreach has been public hostility towards affirmative action. Institutional perceptions of the political, legal and social environment can influence institutions’ motivation for planning (Peterson, 1999) and the development of institutional strategies (Birnbaum, 1998). Thus, the use of outreach initiatives to increase access becomes a legitimate response to the external environment (e.g. Peterson, 1999; Cameron, 2000). Extending Birnbaum’s (1988) idea to university outreach suggests that public policies prohibiting race-sensitive criteria have shaped institutional efforts to increase access for students of color.

In addition to the influences of the external environment, Bolman and Deal (1988) suggested that organizational culture and the institution’s learning behavior influence institutional responses to the constraints of anti-affirmative action policies and subsequent structural changes. Schein (1992) suggests that the leadership must understand the culture of the organization in order to shape it or make changes, particularly in times of institutional crisis. In times of crisis, which is a matter of perception, deep assumptions of institutional values and ideals are revealed. The interaction between leaders and followers creates an opportunity for shared learning which ultimately shapes or changes these deep assumptions or culture. Furthermore, how leaders deal with the crisis reveals their assumptions about the importance of people and their views of human nature. How well an organization manages a crisis, such as the elimination of affirmative action strategies, which creates dissonance between the institution’s espoused goals and values and its capabilities or actions, relates to its culture or learned patterns of behavior and the action of its leaders (Schein, 1992). Hence, institutional restructuring of outreach programs, the revision of admissions/selection criteria, and the determination of long-range goals for increasing access and diversity on campus can all be influenced by unique institutional cultural characteristics.

Within the complex, dynamic environments, such as the current political, social and legal context of access and affirmative action, organizations must “learn” in order to survive and, better yet, to thrive (Birnbaum, 1988; Bolman & Deal, 1997). In the context of anti affirmative action policy, institutions have been forced to recognize that once affirmative admissions strategies were eliminated, greater attention needed to be directed towards the disparities in educational opportunities prior to college. This institutional learning behavior may be linked to the subsequent development of university outreach in the wake of anti affirmative action initiatives.

In summary, this framework provided a means for examining alternative access strategies from an organizational perspective. More specifically, the development of university outreach programs was analyzed in conjunction with environmental factors that were hostile to affirmative action and similar programs that target minority students.

### Research Question.

Given the context of increasing hostility towards the use of affirmative action in admissions, systematic research on outreach initiatives as an alternative to race sensitive admissions is both necessary and timely. This work begins research in this area by asking *how is this institution utilizing outreach as an access strategy within the constraints of anti-affirmative action policies?*

In addition, several focused subquestions informed the analysis.

- What was the institution's post-affirmative action context and how did this context influence the institutional decision concerning affirmative action alternatives?
- How did the institution formulate and adopt outreach as the alternative access strategy in response to the constraints of the anti-affirmative action policies?
- How did the institution implement the outreach as the primary access strategy in response to the constraints of the anti-affirmative action policies?

### Research Design.

This inquiry was part of a larger national study that compared institutional responses of three public, flagship institutions to policies prohibiting the use of affirmative action in admissions decisions. The institution selected for this work, the University of Washington, represented a distinct picture of the institutional context, characteristics, and culture with respect to strategic planning for K-12 outreach. This case analysis introduces comparisons with the other institutions in the study based on preliminary findings from document analysis and institutional reports for the purpose of illustrating the unique strengths of this institution.

### Data Collection and Analysis.

In order to frame the analysis, institutional admissions data from two years prior to and following the anti-affirmative action legislation were analyzed. This data (e.g. race, gender, test scores, and high school) were analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques in order to present a picture of enrollment trends and demographic profiles of student populations.

Additional data were gathered through document analysis and semi-structured interviews with senior level and front-line administrators on each campus and a comparative case study approach was used to analyze the data collected from each institution for the larger study. For this case study, emergent themes from semi-structured interviews with administrators and documents were analyzed following cross-case comparison techniques (Miles & Huberman, 1984). Both the quantitative and qualitative data were used to analyze findings and draw conclusions about the influence of the institution's context on the formulation and implementation of outreach as the

primary access strategy within the constraints legislation prohibiting the use of race-sensitive admission criteria.

## Findings

The University of Washington (UW) is a state-supported institution of higher education. As the most selective of the state's universities, "affirmative action was our way of solving a problem" of minority student underrepresentation (Dean of Undergraduate Admission)<sup>1</sup>. The success of Proposition 209 in California triggered "some uneasiness" for administrators at Washington (Director of Admissions). But they defended their use of affirmative action policies. The "University and ... University President were prohibited from taking a position on a ballot initiative" (University President) so opponents of affirmative action had some advantage in promoting their position. Opponents of affirmative action successfully passed Initiative 200 (I-200) by public referendum in 1997. The text of I-200 states that, "This initiative prohibits government from discriminating against or granting preferential treatment to individuals or groups based on race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in public employment, public education, or public contracting. Government includes all public entities, including the state, cities, counties, public schools, public colleges, public universities, and other governmental instrumentalities" (Initiative 200, 1997). Many criticized the University believing "if [the University] had wanted to prevent [the passage of I-200], they could have."

The University wanted to prevent the consequences of I-200. As the Dean of Undergraduate Admissions ruefully noted, ". . . even when we had affirmative action ... we had not achieved, according to our own desires, the diversity we wanted. And now we dropped further." The number of underrepresented minority students comprised 8.7 percent of the class of 1997, 8.3 percent of the 1998 incoming freshman class, while in the fall of 1999 the number of underrepresented minority students comprised only 7.0 percent of the total freshman class.

As the initial results demonstrate, the "the impact [of Initiative 200] was significant" (University President) for minority student enrollment. Figure 1 graphically represents the impact of I-200 on student enrollment for each race/ethnic student population.

INSERT FIGURE 1 HERE

Representing the enrollment change before 1998 (pre-I-200) and after (following I-200), Figure 1 makes the "significance" plain. African American enrollment decreased by 33 percent in the first year I-200 was in place; Hispanic enrollment declined by 30 percent. American Indian enrollment followed closely with a decline of 26 percent. The enrollment numbers for Hawaiian Pacific Islanders dropped from a low of 38 to an even lower 11 students in the entire Freshman class - 71 percent decrease in enrollment following I-200.

Evaluating the multiple effects of I-200, the administration recognized "we lost people everywhere." Each stage of the matriculation process saw declines in minority student representation. Majority student representation was also impacted. Again representing this loss as

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all quotes from university administrators are from interviews conducted by the research team in May, 2001.

a percentage change immediately before (1997) and after (1998), Figure 2 represents the impact of I-200 on applications.

INSERT FIGURE 2 HERE

Immediately following I-200 African American applications declined by 19 percent, Hispanic students applying fell by 9 percent, and 7 percent fewer applications from American Indians were received. The small pool of Hawaiian Pacific Islander applicants dropped dramatically by 56 percent. Unlike the impact of I-200 on majority student *enrollment*, which increased, Caucasian and Asian American *applications* declined slightly. Though far less than the decrease in minority student enrollment, Caucasian students' applications decreased by 8 percent and Asian American applications decreased by 3 percent.

As Figures 1 and 2 illustrate, "[f]ewer underrepresented minorities applied. A smaller percentage of the applicants were admitted." Figure 3, shows the impact of I-200 on the final stage of the matriculation process in 1999 and 2000: ". . . a smaller percentage of those admitted decided to come" (University President).

INSERT FIGURE 3 HERE

Of the minority students, I-200 had the greatest "discouragement effect" on African American enrollees in 1999. The number of African American and Hispanic students enrolling dropped in 1999. African American enrollments recovered in 2000, the first year of the university's diversity scholarship program.

The decline in minority representation immediately following I-200 challenged the institution's mission of education quality and created a "chilly" climate for minority students. Describing the experience of white students, the President represented the loss of affirmative action as a loss of opportunity for white students to interact with diverse peers. Following I-200, the yield rates for underrepresented students declined and the yield for majority students (Caucasian and Asian American students) increased.

Numbers of African-American, Native American, Hispanic/Latino, and Pacific Islander groups all fell the following fall. . . . If you were a white freshman in the class of 1998, 1 out of every 11 classmates would have been an underrepresented minority. If you were a white freshman in the class of 1999, 1 out of every 18 of your classmates would have been an underrepresented minority (University President).

Based on the espoused philosophy of the institution that students are "better educated and more thoroughly prepared for a global society, a heterogeneous society, a culturally diverse society" when they are educated in a diverse learning environment (University President), the loss of minority representation was believed to have diminished the academic benefits and educational quality provided by attending the University (personal communications, University President; Dean of Undergraduate Admissions). Researchers have found evidence to support the President's position (Hurtado, 1999); and to support the position that " a diverse campus is better academically." (University President).

In addition to diminished academic benefits, I-200 had personal, affective, negative consequences for minority students. Research has found affirmative action to be important because it created a perception that minority students were welcome at the University (Wierzbicki & Hirschman, 2001; Hurtado & Wathington, 2001). The passage of I-200 not only chilled admissions (Orfield, 1992) but chilled the campus climate (Hurtado, 1992). African American and Hispanic students and parents even contacted the Office of Minority Affairs (OMA) to ask if the passage of I-200 meant their admission to the University would be revoked. (VP Office of Minority Affairs). Administrators working with minority students reported an increase in feelings of alienation and isolation among these students following the passage of I-200.

The external constraints required an immediate institutional triage to stop the loss of minority student enrollment. Looking to other similarly situated institutions was the first step of the process to formulate an alternative access strategy. “The President made a tour of just a large number of UC campuses to see what they were doing right after this happened. We watched Texas” (Dean of Undergraduate Admissions).

What Texas and California did do shortly after “this happened” in their state was to institute plans granting automatic admission to students in the top 10 percent and 4 percent of their high school class, respectively. President Larry Faulkner of the University of Texas has proclaimed “the Top 10 percent works for Texas”. The UC system has seen improvements in their minority representation with the Top 4 Percent plan (Schmidt, 2001).

Critics find little to celebrate with the Top Percent plans. Success from these Plans results from “a racially segregated primary and secondary public school environment” (Commission on Civil Rights, 2000, p. 4). Given the struggles before and after Brown v. Board of Education, creating higher education diversity from the “Jim Crow, Inc.” (Knopf, 1976) of public schools raises legitimate skepticism about whether the plans “work” and at what cost.

Planning their response to I-200, a Top Percent plan had “been discussed” (Director of Admissions). State demographics and institutional context prevented the effectiveness of such a plan for Washington. With some pride, the Director of Admissions explained that “[o]ne of the things that our urban areas have done well is to integrate our schools” and a “state law prohibits putting rank and class on transcripts.” Ironically, the lack of segregation created barriers to adopting existing alternatives to increasing access.

Institutional selectivity further compromised implementation of a Top Percent plan as an access strategy. Admissions officers recognized they “were not that selective” because students in the Top 10 percent were already automatically accepted under the admissions plan. One access strategy was ruled out, but new plans had not been formulated. As one administrator described the institution’s predicament, “we are all struggling. We are all saying ‘we don’t quite know what to do’.”

Believing the decline was attributable to eliminating race as a factor in the admissions process, the University’s initial response to the anti-affirmative action legislation was to revise the admissions process (e.g. personal communications with President; Director of Admissions). Post-I-200 admissions considered socioeconomic status as a plus factor; academic excellence despite adversity; a required essay; and two optional essays. (Director of Admissions; Admissions Counselors). Modifications to the admissions process have received mixed results with respect to increasing minority representation. Measures to target disadvantaged students “are always picking up more majority students than ...minority students” (Dean of Undergraduate Admissions).

Institutional research has suggested, however, that I-200 adversely effected all stages of the matriculation process. “Fewer underrepresented minorities applied. A smaller percentage of the applicants were admitted. And a smaller percentage of those admitted decided to come” (University President).

In other words, the University "lost people everywhere" (Director of Admissions), but the critical losses were at the application and the enrollment stages (Wierzbicki & Hirschman, 2001). Researchers at the University found that the decline in minority applications and enrollments was more significant than the decline in admissions. The loss at the application and enrollment stage of the matriculation process appeared to have a “discouragement effect.” (Wierzbicki & Hirschman, 2001; Vice President of Minority Affairs).

Counteracting this negative discouragement effect of I-200 on minority application and enrollment (Dr. Hirschman) directed the President’s agenda for increasing minority representation. “. . .the most important single thing we can do is to increase as dramatically as we can the number of underrepresented minority young men and women to apply to the University.”

The solution to increasing diversity was to implement a “whole bunch of new programs for outreach and recruitment.” The activity following I-200 was chaotic – a crisis situation where everybody wanted to try everything. Some programs were expanded while other programs were newly established and funded through a series of resource reallocations. Without additional state funding for its outreach efforts, reallocation of its limited resources was necessary to achieve more efficiency. Openly encouraging ideas and participation during this crisis counters the typical “threat-rigidity” response by “hunkering down” and becoming more conservative (Whetten & Cameron, 2000). In this environment, greater innovation occurred.

The President then implemented more strategic planning efforts by establishing executive committees to review and implement initiatives to address I-200's negative consequences. In order to efficiently implement the "new programs for outreach and recruitment" to achieve the institution’s diversity goals within the constraints of its limited resources, the President directed the Office of Educational Assessment to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of existing outreach programs sponsored by "central administration". To prevent these efforts from becoming lost in committee, the President also established a timeline for reporting on the evaluations and committee findings. Within this environment of accountability, members of the executive committees also acted promptly to improve on areas of identified weaknesses. (Vice President of Student Affairs; Research Scientist).

Weaknesses were identified through an assessment of the outreach programs conducted by the University’s Office of Educational Assessment. Though charged with the simple task of evaluating strengths and areas of improvement of existing outreach programs, the novelty of evaluating outreach programs proved challenging. Internal politics and channels complicated reporting, criteria for evaluation were vague, and the programs themselves were unsure of the purpose or outcome of the evaluations. Once they were told they would be evaluated, program directors directed “a lot of activity” into determining “..so what am I doing” in this program? In order to overcome the challenges of the evaluation, the researcher established clear reporting channels, sensitive to the political tensions within departments. The researcher also collaborated with the directors and participants in outreach programs to determine their agenda and establish criteria for assessing their ability to meet goals in order to overcome anxieties of evaluation. This process recognized the difficulty of evaluating outreach programs, many with long-range orientations, with traditional outcome measures of success. Collaboration enhanced not only the

determination of appropriate evaluation criteria, but strengthened relationships between the University and their outreach partners within the community.

The outreach programs at the University represent both short and long term initiatives for increasing the applicant pool. Student Ambassadors, EMPOWER (a program to enhance cultural understanding on campus), and University of Washington counselors based in high schools represent notable short-term initiatives to increase diversity. These programs provide social, cultural, and community support for high school seniors preparing for college. Academic support, e.g. tutoring, SAT/ACT preparation, and guidance on application and financial aid procedures are also provided. Notable long-term initiatives, those that target younger students, include Early Scholars Outreach Program (ESOP) and Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR-UP).

Though organized differently the programs share common characteristics. Each program provides the high school students with information about college generally and the University in particular and extends the recruiting arm of the University throughout the state. Further, the programs provide minority high school students with minority advisors from the University community. Finally each program attempts to counter the "discouragement effect" of I-200 by providing a consistent and continuing message to minority and low-income students that the University welcomes them.

Though too early to report on effectiveness of these programs for increasing minority student representation, initial evaluations have shown the programs sponsored by students (e.g. Student Ambassadors) to be the most useful in the University's efforts to increase diversity (President; Director of Admissions; Evaluator). These programs appear to address both the "discouragement effect" and absolute effect of I-200 on enrollments. Continued evaluation of the long-term programs will determine their effectiveness for "swelling the pipeline of those who are eligible to apply because they have taken the right academic courses and the pipeline of those who are psychologically, socially, and financially prepared to apply" (President).

The perception that senior administration is on the "same page" reflects the leadership of the President. The President's commitment to outreach and recruitment is unequivocal. He appointed a Diversity Committee with the charge to "increase programs of outreach and recruitment to get our undergraduate numbers back to where we need them to be" (President). He also insured the availability of significant financial resources to support his agenda.

It is uncharacteristic for this University to respond as quickly to anything as it did to this issue. It is uncharacteristic for the Board of Regents and senior administration to be on the same page and pulling so vigorously in the same direction (Vice President of Student Affairs).

While opposition to these initiatives does exist within the campus community, the President acknowledged that "we are not a very politically correct campus on the whole, but that's probably one area where those views would not be welcomed."

Displays of effective leadership were seen in various layers of the university. Many people wanted to support diversity efforts and stem the tide of declining minority enrollments. Students were responsible for the creation of the Student Ambassadors and EMPOWER programs, two of the most successful short-term outreach programs as discussed above. Faculty displayed leadership both directly and indirectly through research and planning.

Notably, the Board of Trustees demonstrated significant leadership in supporting the recruiting efforts for minority students. Prior to I-200, the University provided race targeted scholarships as incentives to attract the most exemplary minority students to the institution (President). In the aftermath of I-200 the amounts previously offered proved insignificant to attract the “high market” underrepresented minority students (Director of Financial Aid). The Trustees rather than the President took the lead to address this recruiting problem by providing privately funded full-ride, four year scholarships, making sure “costs were not an issue when a student decides to go somewhere else.” (University President). This strategy has proved successful in recruiting minority students and appears to have escaped legal challenge.

While senior administrators share a commitment to increasing access, the commitment is expressed at different levels: commitment to the President’s agenda, commitment to the institution’s interest in diversity, commitment to the broader social obligations of increasing access to higher education. Most often administrators expressed sentiments combining the first two levels of commitment: “a diverse campus is a better campus”, so no matter “how we dress it up” the goal is “presenting the University in a positive light...to make young people think about us as the institution of choice” (Vice President of Student Affairs).

The latter social justice commitment emphasizes access to higher education generally for those student groups that are historically underrepresented by race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status. “... ours is not a job. It’s a mission” captures a level of commitment beyond the goals of the institution. Though high quality education from the University concerns these administrators, the greater concern is the social obligation of a university.

When we try to justify our own existence as an institution in this society, it’s not based on the welfare of the institution. It’s based on the contribution to higher education and all the good things higher education does; and I believe the most fundamental and critical is providing an open opportunity structure in a democratic society (Dean of Undergraduate Admissions).

At times, this broader goal creates tensions with the interests of advancing the interests of the institution. Nevertheless, the existence of both appears to be advantageous for the comprehensive outreach strategy implemented at the institution to increase access to the institution and diversity within the student body.

## Conclusions.

Key institutional factors contributed to the decision to use outreach as the alternative access strategy and the implementation of the strategy for increasing access and student diversity. The experience of this institution can inform the process other institutions must undergo when developing outreach innovations as either an alternative or supplement to race-sensitive admissions programs.

The institutional context, both the demographics of the state and institutional culture, influenced the University's decision to use outreach and recruitment as the primary strategy for increasing access and diversity. When faced with the challenge of developing new methods to increase the enrollment of underrepresented minority students following I-200, the University looked to institutions facing similar anti-affirmative action constraints. In response to policies eliminating affirmative action, Texas and California implemented a Top Percent plan. State demographics persuaded administrators that such a plan would not work in Washington.

So we don't have these pockets of areas where we have underrepresented students in schools...they're integrated (Vice President of Admissions).

...with the exception of a few areas here, we're talking about integrated neighborhoods and cities here. The issue of the 20 percent, 10 percent will not work in Washington because we have done a good job of integrating our schools...which is why it makes it much more difficult and why we think that holistic review is probably the way to go (administrator of Office of Minority Affairs).

Though facing a similar challenge as Texas and California, the differences in state's demographics required different strategies for responding to the crisis. This creates a greater challenge of developing effective strategies for achieving the institution's diversity goals.

The University addressed some of the challenge of the unknown by turning to institutional research. Individual faculty research and the office of institutional assessment identified the barriers to access resulting from I-200. The results of the research directed the attention of the leadership to "outreach and recruitment and swelling the pipeline of applicants is probably the single most important thing" (President).

Not only did individual leaders emerge as an important conduit to successfully implementing effective outreach and scholarship programs to further diversity efforts, but collaboration between various groups contributed to a collective effort to achieve the institution's goals. An institutional culture appears to have influenced the comprehensive efforts to respond to I-200 and the aggressiveness with which the institution pursued and implemented its outreach strategies. Administrators and the President expressed the core assumptions institutional excellence requires racial/ethnic diversity. Initiative 200 challenged the institutional culture stemming from the value of diversity. In times of crisis, the deep assumptions of an organization, or its culture, are revealed and shaped by its members, particularly its leaders. In this instance the leader recognized some members of the campus community were apathetic to efforts to increase diversity but the dominant values supported diversity.

In times of great change or crisis, members of an institution often look to their leader to make meaning of recent events and to provide direction for the institution. Leadership proved to be the most critical institutional factor in this University's response to I-200 and its choice of outreach as a strategy. "The President wanted to do it. The Provost was in agreement. And the Budget Office folks found a way" (Vice President of Student Affairs).

The mobilization was "an unusual kind of effort" (Administrator of Office of Minority Affairs), motivated by the President and the Board of Trustees. Universities tend to change slowly which is why the response of the University of Washington to I-200 is interesting as an example to other institutions facing similar external pressures, both formal and informal, to eliminating or reducing their use of race-based admissions and financial aid. The President's leadership, dictated the pace.

The nature of the President's leadership, in large part, promoted the successfulness of the response. Within a university context, effective leadership must recognize limited influence at the lower levels of the institution and that valuable ideas and support come from participants at these levels (Birnbaum, 1988). Furthermore leaders' deep assumptions of human nature and more particularly, the individual people they lead are revealed in times of crisis (Schien, 1992).

Though the President set the agenda and goals for responding to I-200, increasing outreach efforts to achieve diversity, the President empowered many members of the campus community to participate in implementing the agenda. In addition to the leadership demonstrated by the President and Board of Trustees, leaders emerged from all The President facilitated a culture of empowerment and openness by reducing structural and social constraints and provided political, financial, and emotional support to individuals attempting to contribute as both direct and indirect leaders.

It remains to be seen whether or not the University of Washington's long-term outreach efforts and their diversity scholarship program will succeed in aiding their efforts to increase the diversity of the student body. The commitment and support of its president, the innovation and dedication of emergent leaders, and the collaborative efforts of many on campus provide a striking blueprint for other organizations to review and adapt to their diversity efforts and planning.

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Figure 1. Impact of I-200 on Minority Freshman Enrollment

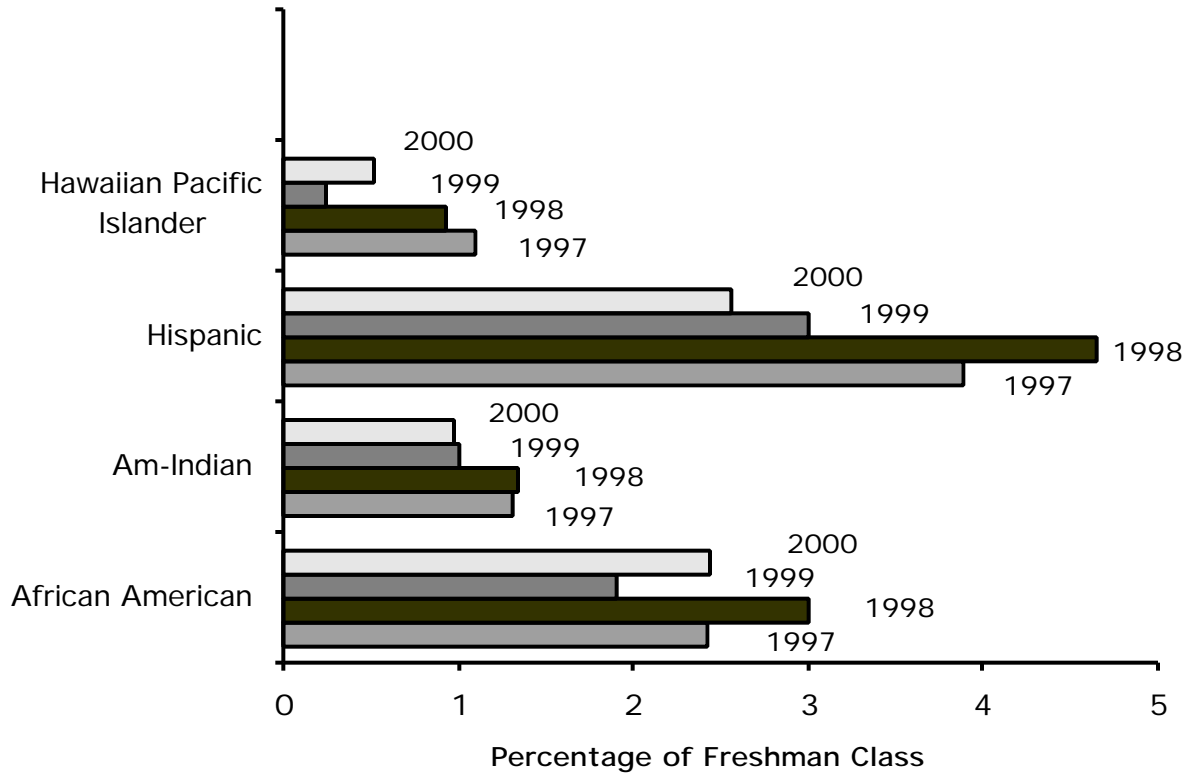


Figure 2. Impact on Applications (% Change)

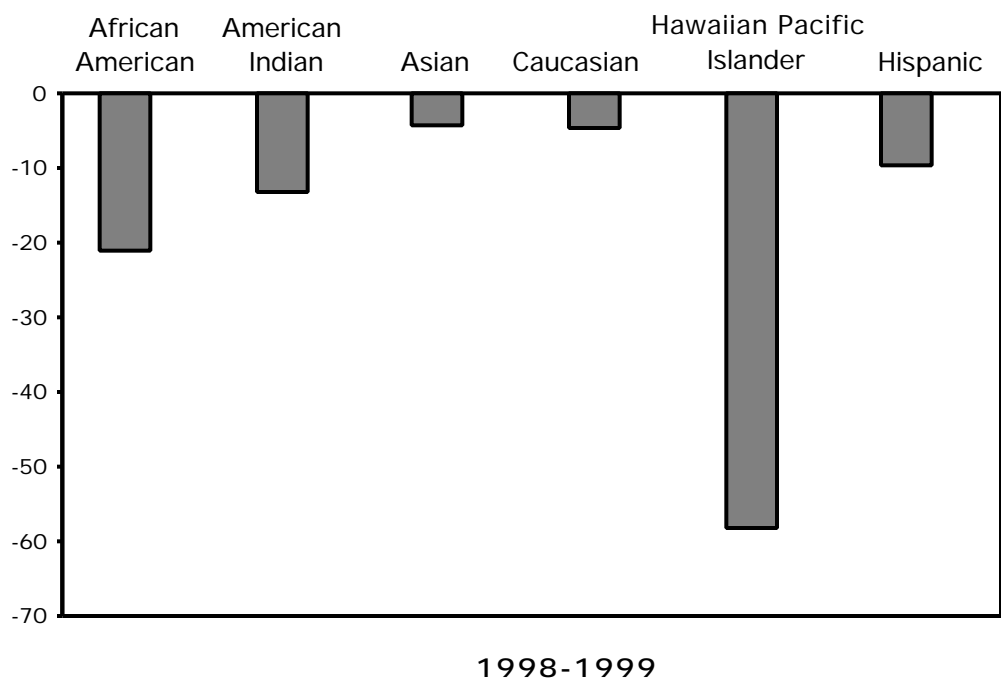


Figure 3. Impact of I-200 (% Change in Enrollment Numbers)

