

The Educational Value of Diversity

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I come from a homogeneously white, small town environment and my experience here has really opened my eyes. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have met people during my freshman year who are largely responsible for who I am now. My six best friends could not have been more different from me. Michelle is from Saudi Arabia but is half American, half Thai. Ana is from Madrid, Spain, and is a really strong, feminist woman. Cornelia is African American from Chicago. Suneela is Indian. My roommate, Grace, is Chinese and very religious. Brandi is white but she grew up poor and has beaten the welfare system. She is the most determined person I have ever met. Grace and Suneela are first generation Americans and still have strong ties to their native cultural traditions and language. And, of course, everybody else offered me perspectives I had never thought about or considered before.

I am sure that I could have taken some classes and learned about all of the different things these people have taught me during my years at Michigan. That would have been interesting but because these women became my friends, I got to learn about it *and* experience it. I think that having the experiences is really the only teacher that ever changes how a person thinks about and sees the world. As fantastic as U of M classes can be, I know that they would never have affected me to the extent that these women have.

A WHITE UNDERGRADUATE
writing as a senior at the University of Michigan

This young woman from a small town values her experiences with students from diverse backgrounds because they have changed her world. Her experience reflects the evidence in the social science research provided the courts in the cases testing the University of Michigan's use of race as a factor in admission. This research demonstrates that a racially and ethnically diverse student body has significant educational benefits for all students, nonminority and minority alike.

We presented the courts a social science argument and evidence on the educational value of diversity and were joined by other social scientists in amicus briefs in the cases eventually decided by the Supreme Court. In a five-to-four decision in *Grutter v. Bollinger et al.* (123 S.Ct. 2325, 2337–41), the Court found that

student body diversity is a compelling state interest that can justify using race in university admissions. . . . Attaining a diverse student body is at the heart of the Law School's proper institutional mission. . . . The Law School's claim is further bolstered by numerous expert studies and reports showing that such diversity promotes learning outcomes and better prepares students for an increasingly diverse workforce, for society, and for the legal profession. Major American businesses have made clear that the skills needed in today's increasingly global marketplace can only be developed through exposure to widely diverse people, cultures, ideas, and viewpoints. High-ranking retired officers and civilian military leaders assert that a highly qualified, racially diverse officer corps is essential to national security. Moreover, because universities, and in particular, law schools, represent the training ground for a large number of the Nation's leaders, *Sweatt v. Painter*, 339 U.S. 629, 634, the path to leadership must be visibly open to talented and qualified individuals of every race and ethnicity. Thus, the Law School has a compelling interest in attaining a diverse student body. (3–4)

When the University of Michigan was sued by Jennifer Gratz and Patrick Hamacher over its undergraduate admissions proce-

dures and by Barbara Grutter over its Law School admissions procedures, we were asked to determine whether, why, and how diversity has educational benefits. The educational value of diversity was to be a cornerstone of the University of Michigan's arguments, and research evidence was critical. Although the value of diversity had been the rationale for considering race as one of many factors in college admissions ever since the 1978 *Bakke* decision, the arguments offered in other court cases lacked the strong theoretical rationale and empirical evidence needed to link diversity and education. As it turned out, social science research had great importance in the *Grutter* and *Gratz* cases before the Supreme Court.

As social scientists, we addressed three issues: *Does* diversity have educational benefits? *How* and *why* might students benefit from being educated in diverse classrooms and on diverse campuses? We developed a theoretical rationale for the educational value of racial and ethnic diversity, reviewed available evidence, and carried out our own analyses of relevant data sets to test the theory that we offered. In this chapter, we highlight the most important aspects of these materials, including related research that has been conducted since our research was provided to the district court.¹ We also present and respond to questions and criticisms that have been raised about the value of diversity during the legal battle that began in 1997 and was resolved by the Supreme Court in June 2003.

In our expert testimony² we emphasized the impact of actual experiences students have with diverse peers (in the classroom and in informal settings on the campus) on two educational outcomes—learning outcomes and democracy outcomes. Thus, from the outset we focused on the broad meaning of diversity: not only how it improves engagement in learning (what Lehman in this volume calls the “pedagogic vision of diversity”) but more broadly how it fosters sentiments and skills necessary for citizenship and leadership in a diverse democracy. We argued that experience with diverse peers fosters these educational outcomes, and provided evi-

dence from our own analyses, and the work of other scholars, that supported this argument.

The Educational Rationale

Educators in American higher education have long argued that affirmative action policies are essential to ensure a diverse student body, that such diversity is crucial to creating the best possible educational environment, and that the educational benefits of racial and ethnic diversity on campus are not limited to any one group of students. All students profit from studying in a college or university that includes a significant number of students from backgrounds different from their own.

Institutions of higher education have an obligation, first and foremost, to create the best possible educational environment for those whose lives are likely to be significantly changed during their years on campus. Specific objectives may vary from one institution to another, but all efforts must be directed to ensuring an optimal educational environment for the young people who are at a critical stage of development. At colleges and universities they will complete the foundation of their lives. Universities, furthermore, have an obligation to help build a more truly democratic society, and they have the special strengths needed to do so.

Young people of college age are discovering who they are and what they want to become. A new environment and the presence of others from varied backgrounds may dramatically affect their involvement in learning, their identities in relation to others, the choices they will make for the rest of their lives, and their commitments to citizenship. Identity development in late adolescence and the importance of higher education, especially interaction with peers during the college years, were described in classic works by psychologist Erik Erikson (1946, 1956) and by sociologist Theodore Newcomb (1943) and are now basic to all theories

of student development (see Upcraft 1989 for a review of contemporary theories).

Institutions of higher education are especially suited to addressing the developmental tasks of late adolescents, who are defining themselves as mature adults independent from their parents. Residential colleges and universities separate the young person from his or her past. They allow students to experiment with new ideas, new relationships, and new roles. Both undergraduate and graduate years are a time of exploration and possibility, before young people make permanent adult commitments. Most educators recognize that the individuals with whom one is educated may be just as important as where one is educated.

Theories of cognitive growth also emphasize the importance of experiences that contrast with one's past, termed "disequilibrium" by the Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget (1971, 1985). Scholars of cognitive development emphasize the critical role of equality in peer relationships and of multiple perspectives in intellectual and moral development. Children and adolescents can best develop a capacity to understand the ideas and feelings of others—what is called "perspective taking"—and can move to a more advanced stage of moral reasoning when they interact with others from different backgrounds who may hold different perspectives and who are also equals. Both diversity and equality in the relationship are necessary for intellectual and moral development.

The Importance of Diverse Environments

Not all institutions of higher education equally encourage identity formation, cognitive growth, and preparation for citizenship. A homogeneous college environment, for example, that replicates the home community's social life and expectations does not encourage the personal struggle and consciousness of thought that are so important for student development. In contrast, campus environ-

ments that foster interaction among students from varied racial and ethnic backgrounds promote the mental and psychological growth that is essential if young people are to move on to fulfilling lives.

It is important to point out that most students have lived in segregated communities before coming to college. About 90 percent of white students and about 50 percent of African American students who entered the University of Michigan in the early 1990s, when our research was conducted, grew up in racially homogeneous neighborhoods and attended racially homogeneous high schools. Only Michigan's Asian American and Latino/a students had much experience with diversity before college, largely because they had attended nearly exclusively white high schools and lived in predominantly white neighborhoods.

In expert testimony submitted on behalf of the university's defense of its admission policies, Thomas Sugrue (1999) dramatically details the racial experiences of applicants from Michigan, New York, Illinois, California, New Jersey, and Ohio, who make up about three-quarters of the university's applicant pool. In those states the typical white student went to public school with no more than 7 percent African American students, and in all states but California with no more than 5.5 percent Latino. (California is an exception in that 21.5 percent of the students in schools attended by typical white students were of Latino origin.) Professor Sugrue also points out that the top four states in degree of black/white school segregation are among these six states with the largest number of applicants to the University of Michigan (Michigan, New York, Illinois, and New Jersey). Segregation is equally dramatic for students of color.

By 1980, 17 of the nation's 20 largest cities had predominantly minority school districts. Most of them are surrounded by overwhelmingly white suburban school districts. As a consequence, University of Michigan demographer Reynolds Farley has shown, these public schools are almost as racially segregated as

those which were constitutionally permitted before the 1954 *Brown* decision. (Sugrue 1999, 35)

This segregated precollege background means that many students, white and minority alike, enter college—the University of Michigan and many others—without experience in interacting with others whose backgrounds differ from their own. Consequently, colleges that have made efforts to diversify their student bodies and to institute policies that foster genuine interaction across race and ethnicity provide the first opportunity for many students to learn from others who have different backgrounds and life experiences. They will learn about these differences, and they will also learn about similarities as well. In an environment that is different from their own backgrounds and thus unfamiliar, students are forced to consider new ideas and confront new feelings. It is through diversity on campus that they face change and challenge, the necessary conditions for intellectual growth and for preparation for citizenship in the diverse democracy that America is increasingly becoming.

Several students remarked on their homogeneous backgrounds and how Michigan's diversity has fostered their growth:

I lived in a black neighborhood for my entire life. I always attended black schools. I do not fault my mother for not providing me with a multicultural background, because that was just how things were. My outlook has definitely broadened here. My assumptions about other cultures have been challenged and I have been stretched in many ways. (An African American woman who grew up in Detroit)

I grew up in a major California city but I lived and went to school primarily in an Asian American situation. I got a lot of multicultural experience while I was in high school by being part of a city-wide organization that drew from many different cultural groups. Being at U of M is the first time I have been in a

diverse educational place. It was my choice to come here because of its diversity. I wanted to be in a place where diverse people get together, really get together, not just co-exist. (An Asian American male from California)

I am Jewish. When I was little, I thought everybody was Jewish. All I had known was Jewish. All of my friends and what seemed like my whole town was Jewish. It is only recently that I am able to reflect back on the town I grew up in. In my freshman year in high school, I moved from Long Island into the city (Manhattan). That gave me many opportunities. The city has no “supposed to.” I could just be me. And I could meet all kinds of people. This is what the U of M is doing for me also. But I have to work at it, to not just fall back into an exclusively Jewish world. (A Jewish woman from New York)

My high school was split between black and white, and a few other minorities. My graduating class was about 250. But even though there was opportunity to know kids from different races, all of my friends were white. Once here, however, I had a big change. Now not all of my friends are white. I have a few really close friends who are African American and Asian American. I have learned so much from all of them. We’re a real group. We could be an advertisement for diversity working at Michigan. I would be oh so much more ignorant if I hadn’t had this experience. (A white male from a midsize town in Illinois)

*Engagement in Learning through
Experience with Diverse Peers*

So far we have made two arguments: first, that heterogeneous environments are crucial for fostering student growth in late adolescence; second, that most students entering the University of Michigan came from fairly segregated environments. Using research in social psychology from the last twenty years, we will now explain

why experience with diverse peers fosters active engagement in learning.

A curriculum that deals explicitly with social and cultural diversity, and a learning environment in which students interact frequently with others who differ from themselves in significant ways, affect the *content* of what is learned. Less obvious, however, is the notion that features of the learning environment affect students' *mode of thought*, and that diversity produces more active thinking and can inspire intellectual engagement and motivation.

Many terms are used in social and cognitive psychology to describe two opposing modes of thought: automatic versus nonautomatic; preconscious versus conscious; peripheral versus central; heuristic versus systematic; mindless versus minded; effortless versus effortful; implicit versus explicit; active versus inactive. Whatever the term, research in social psychology has shown that active thinking and engagement in learning cannot be assumed. This research confirms that much apparent thinking and thoughtful action are actually automatic, or what psychologist Ellen Langer (1978) calls *mindless*. To some extent, mindlessness is the result of previous learning that has become so routine that thinking is unnecessary. Instead of thinking through an issue anew, individuals rely on scripts or schemas that operate automatically.

Automatic thinking plays a pervasive role in all aspects of everyday life, in some instances as a necessary strategy for coping with multiple stimuli in a complex environment. Automatic thinking is often evident not only in perceptual processes and in the execution of such skills as driving and typing, but also in evaluation, emotional reactions, determination of goals, and social behavior itself (Bargh 1997). One of our tasks as educators is to interrupt these automatic processes and facilitate active thinking in our students. Higher education needs to find ways to produce the more active, less automatic mode of thinking among students.

In one of the early studies indicating the pervasiveness of automatic thinking, Langer (1978) laid out many positive psychological

benefits that occur when people are encouraged to use active, effortful, conscious modes of thought rather than automatic thinking. Conscious, effortful thinking helps people develop new ideas and new ways of processing information, ways that may have been available to them previously but were not often used. In several experimental studies, she showed that such thinking increases alertness and greater mental activity—surely something all college teachers strive for in classrooms.

We know that certain conditions encourage effortful, minded, and conscious modes of thought, for example, novel situations for which people have no script or with which they have no past experience. Active thinking is also promoted in a situation that is not entirely novel but is not entirely familiar either, and thus demands more than their scripts allow people to grasp (Langer 1978). A third situation is one that is discrepant from one's past experiences. In novel, somewhat unfamiliar, and discrepant situations, people have to think about what is going on and struggle to make sense of the environment.

Many people face the demands of novelty, instability, unpredictability, multiplicity, and discrepancy when they take up work or travel in a country with a distinctive and unfamiliar culture, with a language that they do not know and customs and social expectations that they do not understand. They have to pay close attention to new social cues, think deeply about what they perceive, and actively try to understand what is going on.

These conditions are exactly what racial and ethnic diversity provides for students coming to college from racially segregated environments. The informal world where students interact with diverse peers in student organizations, residence halls, and casual social settings and the formal classrooms at Michigan provide the *novelty, instability, discontinuity, and discrepancy*³ that are needed to promote active, conscious, effortful thinking—as evidenced by the experience of another student:

I come from a town in Michigan where everyone was white, middle-class, and generally pretty closed-down to the rest of the world, although we didn't think so. It never touched us, so I never questioned the fact that we were "normal" and everyone else was "other" and "different." Listening to other students in class, especially the African American students from Detroit and other urban areas just blew me away. We live only a few hours away and yet we live in completely separate worlds. Even more shocking was the fact that they knew about "my world" and I knew nothing about theirs. Nor did I think that this was even a problem at first. I realize now that people like me can go through life and not have to see another point of view, that somehow we are protected from it. The beginning for me was when I realized that not everyone shares the same views as I, and that our different cultures have a lot to do with that.

Citizenship and Leadership for a Diverse Democracy

Certainly from the time of the founding of our country, education has been seen as the key to achieving an effective citizenry. Democracy, indeed, is predicated upon an educated citizenry. Thomas Jefferson forcefully argued that citizens are made, not born, and that education was the key to making citizens. Jefferson, however, was talking about education only for citizens. His notion of democracy assumed social homogeneity and common identity rather than social complexity and diversity. Nevertheless, Jefferson is a critical figure in rationalizing the role of higher education in civic preparedness, a project expressed in his role in the founding of the University of Virginia in 1823: "It remained clear to Jefferson to the end of his life that a theory of democracy that is rooted in active participation and continuing consent by each generation of citizens demands a civic pedagogy rooted in the obligation to educate all who would be citizens" (Barber 1998, 169). Like the other great

public institutions, the University of Michigan, founded in 1817, had from its beginnings the mission of providing knowledge for the betterment of civil society. The mission of the College of Literature, Sciences, and Arts, inscribed in marble in its central office, has guided the college from its earliest state: “Artes Scientia Veritas—Religion, morality, and knowledge being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged.”

If education is the very foundation of democracy, how does diversity foster democracy? The compatibility of diversity and democracy is not self-evident, nor is the implication of diversity for civic unity and disunity a new problem. How to achieve unity, despite or because of difference, has been a central theme in democratic theory ever since the ancient Greeks. In her 1992 book, *Fear of Diversity*, University of Michigan political scientist Arlene Saxonhouse details the debates that took place in ancient Greece about the impact of diversity on capacity for democracy. Plato, Saxonhouse says, envisioned a city-state in which unity and harmony would be based on the shared characteristics of a homogeneous citizenry, a conception of democracy that has prevailed in the United States. Plato’s pupil Aristotle, however, advanced a political theory in which unity would be achieved through difference. Saxonhouse writes, “Aristotle embraces diversity as the others had not. . . . The typologies that fill almost every page of Aristotle’s *Politics* show him uniting and separating, finding underlying unity and significant differences” (235). He contended that democracy based on such unity would be more likely to thrive than one based on homogeneity. What makes democracy work, according to Aristotle, is equality among citizens who are peers (admittedly only free men at the time, not women and not slaves), but who hold diverse perspectives and whose relationships are governed by freedom and rules of civil discourse. It is discourse over conflict, not unanimity, Aristotle believed, that helps democracy thrive (Pitkin and Shumer 1982).

Common conceptions of democracy in the United States do not

treat difference and conflict as congenial to unity, however. In general, lay understandings of democracy and citizenship take one of two forms: (1) a liberal, individualist conception in which citizens out of self-interest participate through voting for public servants to represent them or through other highly individual ways, and (2) a direct participatory conception, in which people from similar backgrounds who are familiar with each other come together and share a common, overarching identity, as in the New England town meeting, to debate the common good. Both of these conceptions privilege individuals rather than groups, and similarities rather than differences.

The increasingly heterogeneous population in the United States challenges the relevance of these popular conceptions of democracy. Neither is a sufficient model for democracy for the United States today (or for that matter for democracies in the increasingly heterogeneous societies all over the world). What is needed is a multicentric democratic vision. “Neither Rousseau’s democratic order as an overarching common identity nor Locke’s minimalist conception of a collection of separate self-interests aggregated into a limited state will suffice as a proper vision for the type of democracy necessary today” (Guarasci and Cornwell 1997, 8).

There is little wonder that the United States and its universities specifically are now facing cultural, disciplinary, and political debates over the extent to which democracy can survive with greatly increased heterogeneity and so many group-based claims in the polity. Yet it is clear that an ethnic hierarchy and one-way assimilation, both of which call for the muting of differences and cultural identities, are unlikely to prevail in the future (Fredrickson 1999). “We need a democratic order that can contain the contradiction of difference and connection, self and community, one and many” (Guarasci and Cornwell 1997, 8). It is a vision of democracy in which difference and democracy are mutually compatible.

Several dimensions of preparation for citizenship can be discerned from the theories of Aristotle and Piaget that can make dif-

ference and democracy mutually compatible. The conditions deemed important include the presence of diverse others and diverse perspectives; equality among peers; and discussion under rules of civil discourse. In our research we proposed that these conditions foster the orientations that students need to be citizens and leaders in a diverse democracy when they leave college: perspective taking, mutuality and reciprocity, acceptance of conflict as a normal part of life, capacity to perceive differences and commonalities both within and between groups in society, interest in the social world, and citizen participation.

Theoretically, students educated in institutions that include students from varied backgrounds are more motivated and better prepared to be citizens and leaders in an increasingly heterogeneous democracy. However, to be prepared to participate effectively in the U.S. democracy and as global citizens, students need to understand the multiple perspectives inherent in a diverse situation, to appreciate the common values and integrative forces that incorporate differences in the pursuit of the broader common good, and to understand and accept cultural differences that arise in a racially and ethnically diverse society and world.

Summary of the Educational Rationale

In summary, we argue that students' experiences with racial and ethnic diversity have far-ranging and significant educational benefits for both learning and democracy outcomes, and that these benefits extend to all students, nonminorities and minorities alike. Because diversity is crucial for education, universities are obliged to create the best possible educational environments by building a diverse student body, and to use that resource—much as they use other educational resources such as an excellent faculty, infrastructure, or library—to foster learning and civic preparedness. Only in such a setting can students of all

racial and ethnic backgrounds acquire the tools needed for a life of engagement in active learning and contribution to a democratic society.

Evidence in Support of the Theoretical Rationale

Racial and ethnic diversity are likely to foster learning and democracy outcomes, but these effects do not happen automatically. Institutions of higher education have to make appropriate use of the racial and ethnic diversity on their campuses. They have to make college classrooms and informal educational settings authentic public places, where students from different backgrounds can take part in conversations and share experiences that help them develop an understanding of the perspectives of other people.

Such learning and understanding are captured in one student's response to a classroom experience at the University of Michigan:

The most helpful aspect of the course was reading the articles from so many different perspectives and then discussing them with students from so many different racial and ethnic groups in class. Living through the heated discussions in class and being asked to participate actually rocked my world and opened some doors. I realized that my past pattern of not talking in class and being invisible was a way of avoiding having to think about or engage in difficult and complex issues. Now that I have engaged and even disagreed with others, it seems like there is no turning back. I'm ready now to wrestle with ideas and multiple perspectives. This change has spilled over into other areas of my life also. I actually am doing much better in my other classes because I am not afraid to think, speak and be challenged intellectually. This finally feels like what college is supposed to be about.

Another student comments about the impact of experience with diversity on his growing commitment to citizenship.

Before coming to Michigan and getting to know so many different kinds of people, and before I took classes specifically on race in America, I never thought of myself as political. I am ashamed to say that I didn't even vote in the last election, even though I was old enough. Now I realize that was because I didn't want to bother about any part of the world outside of my own social circle. Politics was "out there"; I was "in here" in my own little world. Ironically, it was by hearing stories from African American students from Detroit and Latino students from the southwest that opened up my eyes to the limits of always being "in here." I no longer want the walls. I'd rather have a full life. Part of that life is that I do see myself as being a citizen and making a difference in the communities in which I will eventually live.

However powerful such testimony may be, it is not sufficient to compel acceptance of our theoretical rationale for the importance of diversity in the college experience. To determine how engagement in learning and development of democratic sentiments are related to experiences with diversity, as our theoretical rationale says they should be, we reviewed the literature on higher education and undertook three analyses of existing databases: a multi-institutional national study of college students, a study of a cohort of University of Michigan students, and a study of a University of Michigan course on intergroup relations. Because we were able to analyze how diversity influences student learning and democracy outcomes at the national level, the institutional level (focusing on the University of Michigan), and at the level of a classroom in which interaction among students from varied backgrounds was fully integrated with course content, we could take both macroscopic and microscopic looks at how diversity works at various levels. The outcomes we examined conform to the learning and democracy consequences we have proposed.

Our research considered three categories of measures of engagement in learning:

- Growth in active thinking processes that reflect a more complex, less automatic mode of thought
- Intellectual engagement and motivation
- Growth in a broad range of intellectual and academic skills

We focused on four categories of democracy measures:

- Perspective taking, which measures the motivation to understand other people's points of view
- Citizenship engagement, which measures motivation to participate in activities that affect society and the political structure, as well as actual participation in political and community activities during college and in community service in the five years after leaving college
- Racial/cultural engagement, which measures cultural knowledge and awareness, and motivation to participate in activities that promote racial understanding
- Compatibility of differences, which includes the belief that basic values are common across racial and ethnic groups, and the belief that differences are not inevitably divisive to the fabric of society

*The Studies: What Did We Do,
and How Did We Do It?*

To determine how learning and civic preparedness for a diverse democracy are related to students' experiences with diversity, as our theoretical review suggests that they should be, we conducted several statistical analyses of these three sets of data. These systematic analyses were designed to provide scientific insight into the processes by which students are changed by their college experiences. Three characteristics of these analyses should be noted: they are based on data collected over time; they take choices and conse-

quences into account; and they provide both a national and a local University of Michigan perspective.

Data over Time

Growth and development among college students obviously takes place over time. As a result, the most effective research approaches use data collected from the same individuals at more than one time point. This longitudinal approach, in which researchers collect information from students on two or more occasions, allows a systematic analysis of how students develop by comparing data collected from individuals at one time to data collected from these same individuals at later points in time. Moreover, by relating patterns of growth to the educational conditions and activities that students experience between the times the data were collected, we can understand how different experiences promote growth and development among college students.

Taking Choices and Consequences into Account

In studying students over time we recognize that individuals do not make choices randomly, nor do they leave their previous attitudes and experiences at the front door when they enter college. As a result, the choices that students make (and the consequences that these choices have) need to be taken into account in order to make sound judgments about how campus experiences affect students.

For example, we are likely to find that students majoring in mathematics and science have growing interest in science, as compared to those majoring in the humanities. While this may seem to prove that growth in scientific interest is caused by majoring in science, it is important to recognize that those who were drawn into science majors are likely to have been more interested in science

when they entered college. In order to make a fair judgment about whether majoring in science or the humanities is differentially related to growth in an interest in science, we need first to take into account the initial differences in interest between these two groups.

Similarly, to study the growth and development of learning and democracy outcomes as related to diversity experiences, it is important to take into account (or control for) differences across individuals in their initial position on measures of learning and democracy, as well as their tendency to be drawn to diversity-related experiences. When we do this, we can be reasonably sure that a positive outcome of diversity experiences does not simply reflect the fact that students who had those experiences were already more positive on that outcome when they entered college.⁴

The Data: National and Local

The databases we used offer two perspectives—one local to Michigan and the other national in scope—that create a comprehensive view of how diversity experiences affect student outcomes. The national data, provided by the Cooperative Institutional Research Program (CIRP) and the UCLA Higher Education Research Institute, were collected from 11,383 students attending 184 colleges and universities. The students entered in 1984, were followed through their senior year in 1989, and were tested again five years later in the postcollege world. The Michigan data were provided by the Michigan Student Study (MSS), which examined 1,582 students on the educational dynamics of diversity on the Michigan campus. The Michigan data came from a series of extensive questionnaires given to all undergraduate students of color and a large, representative sample of white students at the time they entered the University of Michigan in 1990, and again at the end of their first, second, and senior years. We used the entrance and fourth-year data in our studies.

What Do We Mean by Racial/Ethnic Diversity?

Diversity has three meanings. First, there is “structural diversity,” represented by the percentage of a student body that is from an ethnic/racial group other than white. Second, there is “classroom diversity,” defined as exposure to knowledge about race and ethnicity in formal classrooms. Third, there is “informal interactional diversity,” indicated by the extent to which students interact with peers from racial/ethnic backgrounds different from their own. Classroom and informal interactional diversity carry the most important causal role in explaining how racial and ethnic diversity produce educational outcomes for students because they tell us about students’ *actual experiences with diversity*. A student may attend a racially/ethnically diverse institution but live a life at college that is nearly exclusively with peers from his/her own racial/ethnic background. What role, then, does structural diversity play in the positive impact of diversity on students?

Structural diversity has two major effects. First, it makes actual experience with diversity possible. Longitudinal studies show that in colleges and universities with greater proportions of racial/ethnic minority students, white students are more likely to socialize and develop friendships with peers of a different race/ethnicity, and discuss racial issues with peers (Chang 1996; Milem and Hakuta 2000; Hurtado, Dey, and Trevino 1994; Antonio 1998). An especially important study—important because it was carried out at a time when affirmative action had become highly politicized—showed that students at 461 colleges and universities were most likely to engage in four kinds of cross-racial interactions (eating together, studying together, dating, and interacting with someone of a different racial/ethnic background) on the most diverse campuses (Chang, Astin, and Kim, 2004). Second, structural diversity increases the range of student viewpoints, and thus fosters intellectual diversity (Chang, Seltzer, and Kim, 2002).

Structural diversity is important, therefore, *because* it enables

more students to have actual experience with diverse peers, and because with diversity in backgrounds students are exposed to a broader range of viewpoints based on their different experiences in life. This does *not* imply that all members of an ethnic or racial group think alike, only, that on average, race—just like growing up in a rural or urban environment, in privilege or hardship, in different parts of the country, and so on—is correlated with perspectives on the way society operates. Indeed, there is ample evidence to this effect (Bobo 2001).

We contend, however, that it is classroom and informal interactional diversity that carries the critical causal role in explaining how diversity influences student outcomes. Structural diversity may be thought of as a necessary but not sufficient condition for students to gain educationally from racial/ethnic diversity in higher education. Our work focuses, therefore, on the impact of actual experience with diversity in classes and in the informal campus world.

In the national study, “classroom diversity” was measured by only a single question—enrollment in an ethnic studies class. As a consequence, we found that, while informal interaction with diverse peers had consistent effects for all four groups of students (African American, Asian American, white, Latino/a), classroom diversity had effects on only some outcomes and only for some groups. (See the full presentation of findings in the *Harvard Educational Review*, Gurin et al. 2002.) Therefore, in this chapter experience with diversity in the national study means informal interaction, which was measured by the frequency with which students socialized with a person of a different race, discussed racial issues, or attended cultural awareness workshops over the four years of college.

In the Michigan study, we investigated three kinds of diversity experiences, and for the analyses we carried out for this chapter we brought them together into one measure reflecting overall experience with diversity during the four years of college. (See Gurin et al. 2002 for a presentation of the *separate* effects of the three kinds of diversity experiences.) One kind of diversity experience was in

classrooms;⁵ it was represented by how much students said they had been exposed in classes to “information/activities devoted to understanding other racial/ethnic groups and inter-racial ethnic relationships,” and if they had taken a course during college that had an important impact on their “views of racial/ethnic diversity and multiculturalism.” A second kind of diversity experience, informal interaction with diverse peers, included both amount and quality of interaction. Positive quality of interracial/interethnic interactions was represented by the extent to which students said their most frequent cross-racial interactions had involved “meaningful, and honest discussions about race and ethnic relations” and “sharing of personal feelings and problems.” Quantity of cross-racial interaction came from the students’ assessment of amount of contact they had at Michigan with racial/ethnic groups other than their own. A measure that involved both quality and quantity represented the number of their six best friends at college who were not of their own racial/ethnic group. A third kind of diversity experience measured participation in multicultural campus events and intergroup dialogues. The multicultural campus events were Hispanic/Latino(a) Heritage Month, Native American Month (the annual Pow Wow), Asian American Awareness Week, the Martin Luther King Jr. Symposium, and Black History Month. Intergroup dialogues, offered on the Michigan campus within various courses, involve weekly sessions of structured discussion between an equal number of members (usually seven or eight) from each of two identity groups (Arab/Jewish, Anglo/Latino/a, men/women, African American/white, Native American/Latino/a, and others). The students discuss contentious issues that are relevant to their particular groups.

Learning Outcomes

The analyses we are summarizing here are based on the composite measures of both diversity experiences and of learning outcomes.

What did these analyses of the national and Michigan data tell us about the impact of diversity experiences on learning outcomes? (See Gurin et al. 2002 for the tabular presentation of the effects of the different types of diversity experiences on learning outcomes.)

As we had predicted, the students who had the most diversity experiences in their college years showed the greatest engagement in active thinking processes, self-reported growth in intellectual engagement and motivation, and growth in subjectively assessed intellectual and academic skills. This general conclusion is supported by four major points that can be drawn from analyses conducted for the litigation.

- The analyses reveal a pattern of consistent, positive relationships between learning outcomes and students' experiences with diversity, and these effects apply across students in four ethnic/racial groups (African American, white, Latino(a)⁶ and Asian American).
- The results are also consistently positive across multiple learning outcome measures designed to capture students' active thinking processes, intellectual skills and abilities, and motivations for educational progress.
- The results are confirmed in two different studies of the college experience, one that examined effects across 184 institutions (the Cooperative Institutional Research Program national study), and one that focused on the University of Michigan (the Michigan Student Study).
- The results can reasonably be talked about as having demonstrated effects of experience with diversity. (See our discussion above on choices and consequences. No field study in which it is impossible to randomly assign students to high- or low-experience conditions can conclusively demonstrate "effect." However, our procedures go a long way to insure that the results actually come from the experiences students had with classroom and informal interactional diversity, and not primarily from certain kinds of students choosing to have diversity experiences in college.)

In the national study all four groups (white, African American, Asian American, and Latino(a) students) who reported the greatest amount of diversity experience during college were the *most* intellectually engaged at the end of college, after adjusting for how intellectually engaged they were when they entered college. Intellectual engagement was represented by drive to achieve, intellectual self-confidence, interest in attending graduate school, importance placed on writing original works, and creating artistic works. Diversity experience also had positive effects, for all groups of students, on self-reported academic skills, represented by how much they felt they had changed over their college years in general knowledge, analytical/problem solving skills, ability to think critically, writing skills, and foreign-language skills, as well as by increases from freshman to senior year in self-ratings of academic ability, writing ability, and listening ability. Because entrance measures of the three self-ratings of ability were used as statistical controls in assessing the effect of diversity experience, we can be fairly well assured of the conclusion that diversity experience increased these students' sense of their academic competence since entering college.

In the Michigan study, white, African American, and Asian American students who had the greatest amount of experience with diversity during their college years were the *most* intellectually engaged at the end of college. Intellectual engagement was indicated by the students' assessment that they had gained "a broad, intellectual exciting education at Michigan," and their level of satisfaction with the "intellectual quality and challenge of classes."

An example of the meaning of this finding comes from a student who attributes her involvement with ideas and learning to interacting with students with many different kinds of experiences:

I have found in my four years here that I have benefited by being forced to deal with people and cultures that I am unfamiliar with. I am here to learn and I feel my most important learning came from personal experiences—challenges in dealing with

people who are different from me. . . . It has given me the opportunity to meet people and work with people who “make waves,” who talk different from me, who look different from me, who grew up on the other side of the town, who sometimes don’t even speak English as their first language, who are the first ones in their family to go to college. The people whom I differ from the most are the ones I have learned from the most. I got really turned on to ideas and understanding the world from dealing with Michigan’s diversity.

There was also a significant effect of diversity experience on active, engaged thinking for all three groups of students. White, African American, and Asian American students who had the greatest amount of experience with diversity at Michigan were also the most motivated for active thinking as fourth-year students, controlling for their scores on this same measure of active thinking when they entered college four years before. These results mean that diversity experience had fostered active thinking over and beyond student predispositions to think actively about human behavior when they entered college. Active thinking was measured by such items as “prefer complex rather than simple explanations for people’s behaviors,” “enjoy analyzing the reasons or causes for people’s behaviors,” “think about the influence society has on other people.”

A faculty member who teaches courses on language reports how racial and ethnic diversity in his classroom fostered the students’ awareness of complexity.

The course is about Americanization processes in language, that all spoken English in the United States had at one point or another resulted from such processes. To make this vivid for students, I asked them to do a language study of their own background. The diversity in the classroom produced multiple examples of Americanization. In discussing these they also became aware of the extraordinary complexity there is in ethnicity and

race. One African-American student had a grandfather who was Cherokee. His grandfather had learned English in an Indian boarding school. This student told some of the stories he had heard from his grandfather, who, when married, had become assimilated into the black world. The other students in the class were not prepared for this non-obvious part of this student's identity, and it forced them to see race, ethnicity, and language in much more complex ways. If there hadn't been diversity in this class, the course would not have been as successful. The students learned not only about their own Americanization histories in language but also about the histories of other students from rich diverse ethnicities. It certainly made for a more complex understanding of Americanization, English, and what is "standard" English.

Another faculty member makes a similar point about complexity from a philosophy course on law and philosophy. She describes a student presentation on the validity of campus student organizations organized around lines of race and ethnicity.

The student argued that racial distinctions were harmful but that affiliations along ethnic lines were relatively benign. Therefore, it would be wrong to have a White Students Organization (or, by parallel reasoning, a Black Students Organization), but alright to have an Irish-American Organization. She argued that the latter organization would, as a matter of fact, exclude blacks, but that this exclusion was not racist because the purpose of the organization was not racial exclusion. An African American student in the class objected: "What makes you think I wouldn't be entitled to join the Irish-American Organization? My mother is Irish-American." All of the students were stunned. They learned something about the complexity of race and ethnicity, and the peculiarities of racial definition in America!

One thing that this story illustrates, the professor continues, is the power of knowledge that is gained through personal sharing.

The particular objection to what the student had been saying had not crossed my mind as an instructor, even though I had just been teaching about the one-drop rule (of racial classification in the United States) in lecture. But the error in the student's claims was evident to someone who personally identified as mixed-race. This shows why it is so important to have diverse students in the classroom, and not depend on some abstract discussion among whites only about diversity issues. Whites can have "book" knowledge of some relevant fact but not be able to summon it up when it is needed, because it is not salient to them. The same applies, of course, to members of any race—different sets of facts are salient to them because of their racial identities.

The professor is saying that diversity in the classroom provides the opportunity—when utilized by the faculty—to show that social knowledge requires active exploration of phenomena that do not fit prior conceptions and expectations.

Students also attest to the impact of classroom diversity on their engagement in learning and deeper understanding of multiple assumptions and perspectives.

The major way that diversity has increased my involvement in learning is seeing how many different assumptions people bring to a discussion. It has been fascinating to become aware of different ways of thinking, and often assumptions and ways of thinking go back to the experiences that students had before they came to Michigan.

Students who have grown up in different countries and different cultures in this country are often very inquisitive and ask a lot of questions in class. At least they do when the professor encourages that. When others are active in class, it helps me to become more active also. It becomes a "turned on" environment. Several English literature classes have helped me because they allowed students to talk about the relationship between literature and

politics, cultures, and the world. Diverse students who have different life experiences make those discussions really interesting.

Hearing things from students with many different backgrounds and life experiences has taught me to put things in perspective, to explore motives and perspectives, and not just take things at face value. I go beneath what I read and hear now, and diversity is responsible for that. Also I want to learn more. Someone says something that strikes me as novel, that I didn't know anyone thought or had experienced. And I want to get beneath it, to understand it. I have become a whole lot more curious. I was pretty much ready to accept things my community stood for.

The philosophy professor and one of the students point to a crucial condition for classroom diversity to be effective. Professors have to foster open discussion and utilize the potential of student diversity to bring out multiple points of view for classroom diversity to have educational benefits.

The Research of Other Scholars on Learning Outcomes

Evidence supporting the impact of actual experience with diversity on learning outcomes comes from other scholars as well as from the data that we analyzed and from the comments of students attending the University of Michigan. Two major types of studies carried out by other scholars have shown supportive results. First, the vast majority of these studies, like ours, have tied measures of students' experiences with diversity in the classroom and in the broader campus environment to measures of student outcomes. In these studies, evidence for the impact of diversity comes from analysis of the data, not from asking students to assess the effect of diversity themselves. Another important characteristic of this first type of research is that nearly all of these studies are longitudinal in nature, follow-

ing the same students over time and tying their experiences in college to changes in outcomes across time. The second type of studies, fewer in number, have asked students themselves (or faculty or administrators) to give their subjective assessment of how much experience with diversity has affected student learning.⁷ These studies, using different samples and a variety of measures, have shown consistent effects on engagement in learning and thinking.

Relevant to our findings regarding informal interaction, Chang (1999) found that there was the most interracial interaction on campuses with the greatest amount of student racial/ethnic diversity, and that such peer interactions fostered growth in intellectual self-concept (as well as retention in college, overall college satisfaction, and social self-concept) four years after college entry. Similarly, studies based on the National Study of Student Learning reveal that cognitive complexity measures are significantly associated with a variety of exposure and interaction variables, both after the first year of college (Pascarella et al. 1996) and in the second and third years of college (Whitt et al. 1998). In addition, the homogeneity of college peers (measured by participation in a sorority or fraternity) was negatively associated with this measure of students' cognitive complexity (Pascarella et al. 1996).

Utilizing a CIRP national sample of students different from the one identified for the legal cases, Hurtado (2001) found that students who studied frequently with someone from a different racial/ethnic background reported more growth on such learning self-assessments as problem-solving skills, general knowledge, critical thinking, foreign-language ability, writing skills, mathematical ability, and academic self-confidence. Similar kinds of effects have also been documented by Kuh (2003), using data from 285,000 students who answered the National Survey of Student Engagement. Kuh showed that students are more likely to be involved in active and collaborative learning when they are exposed to diversity.

Research on curricular initiatives that emphasize exposure to

knowledge about race and ethnicity also supports our theoretical point of view about the potential impact of classroom diversity. Milem and Hakuta (2000) describe work carried out to evaluate a curricular project intended to infuse a diversity perspective into human development courses in college (MacPhee, Kreutzer, and Fritz 1994). This evaluation used both quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the impact of the curriculum transformation that occurred in these courses. The results show that the students had developed a number of critical thinking skills, that their levels of ethnocentrism had declined, and that they were able to make important distinctions between the causal meaning of poverty and the causal meaning of race/ethnicity as risk factors in the development of children. Additional support for the importance of curriculum can be found in an exhaustive review of evaluation studies of diversity programs, including multicultural education courses, carried out by Walter and Cookie Stephan (2001). Their review shows an overwhelmingly positive picture of the effects of curricular and cocurricular diversity programs. They examined thirty studies of long-term effects, all but two of them showing positive effects, as well as fifteen studies of short-term effects, none of which found negative effects.

Finally, two studies of short-term effects ask students themselves to assess the impact of diversity experience on their learning. One of these, a survey of law students attending the Harvard University and the University of Michigan law schools, shows that a very large majority of the students thought that discussing legal issues with diverse peers had significantly influenced their views of the law and their consideration of multiple perspectives (Orfield and Whitla 2001). For example, almost two-thirds of the students reported that “most of their classes were better because of diversity” and that they had personally benefited from this diversity. Because of the limited diversity in these schools, not all of the classes these students took were racially diverse. When law students were asked to compare their racially homogeneous classes with their diverse classes, 42 per-

cent said that their diverse classes were superior in three ways: range of discussion, level of intellectual challenge, and seriousness with which alternative views were considered. Thus, an impressive proportion of these students attending two prestigious law schools believed that racial/ethnic diversity had enhanced their legal education.

A similar study was carried out on 639 medical students attending Harvard University and the University of California at San Francisco (Whitla et al. 2003). Nearly all of the students said that a diverse student body was a positive aspect of their educational experience. Eighty-four percent further thought that diversity had enhanced classroom discussion, and only 3 percent thought it had inhibited discussion. Eighty-six percent of the students also said that classroom diversity fostered serious discussion of alternative viewpoints.

All of these studies have been carried out with college students or with students in professional schools and thus were the most relevant to the affirmative action cases that concerned the use of race as one of many factors in college/law school admission. Additional relevant research, which has been carried out with students in K–12 schooling, was summarized in an amicus brief submitted to the Supreme Court by the National Education Association (Brief of Amici Curiae National Education Association at 8, *Grutter* [No. 02–241]). Reviewing these studies, the NEA concludes that “a racially diverse classroom remains the single best method for teaching our children to judge others as individuals, rather than according to stereotypes and prejudices. And, learning in a racially diverse setting furthers students’ cognitive and intellectual development—thus providing an important educational benefit to all students, of every race” (10).

Is there no contrary evidence? Apart from critiquing our expert testimony (to which we return later), the opponents of affirmative action offered one study, published just a month before the Supreme Court hearing, which purportedly contradicted this wide

body of research showing positive effects of experience with diversity. This study (Rothman et al. 2003) was based on a survey of 140 colleges and universities, sponsored by the National Association of Scholars, a major opponent of affirmative action and the source of amicus briefs submitted on behalf of the plaintiffs at the district, circuit, and Supreme Court levels. The study correlated an institution's percentage of African American students (ranging from 0 to 43 percent) with students' satisfaction with their education and students', faculty members', and administrators' perceptions of the quality of education at these schools. Perception of quality was represented by their judgments of the work habits and readiness of the students. The study shows that institutions with the largest proportion of African American students were viewed by students, faculty, and administrators as being of lower quality.

Three major problems with this study make it irrelevant to research on the educational value of diversity. First, there is a major flaw in their causal claims. Their central finding was this: "As the proportion of black students enrolled at the institution rose, student satisfaction with their university experience dropped, as did the assessments of the quality of their education, and the work efforts of their peers" (15). As Stephen Raudenbush (2003) points out, any reasonable reader would conclude that this study had found *increasing* diversity had harmed education. But, in fact, the authors simply compared 140 institutions *at a single point in time, and thus had no evidence about the effects of increasing diversity.*

Second, though the authors claim that the study addresses the issue of diversity, our arguments about the educational benefit of diversity include interaction between students of several groups, not merely African American students. Moreover, there is no measure in this study about actual interaction even between white and African American students. It depends entirely on students', faculty members', and administrators' perceptions of the quality of education in these schools.

Third, the study has no relevance to the central issue that was before the Supreme Court, using race as one of many factors in admission. The authors suggest that institutions serving large proportions of African American students suffer low quality *because of their affirmative action policies*. The study provides no basis for this assertion. Affirmative action exists only at predominantly white, selective, top-tier schools that use it to assure diversity. Schools that enroll more than about 8 to 10 percent African American students (generally the top percentage that selective institutions have been able to enroll, even with significant outreach efforts) have no relevance to the question that faced the Supreme Court because those schools do not use affirmative action in admission of students. “Yet precisely those schools (up to 43 percent African American enrollment) are driving the results of this study. Therefore, the Rothman study provides no basis for any conclusions about the potential benefits of adopting (or discarding) an affirmative action policy” (Raudenbush 2003).

What this study tells us is that faculty, students, and administrators were more critical of the quality of education in those schools that serve larger proportions of African American students. It tells us nothing about diversity or about the impact of affirmative action.

Democracy Outcomes

Our analyses show strong support for the role of diversity experience in helping students become active citizens and participants in a pluralistic democracy. (See Gurin et al. 2002 for the tabular presentation of the effects of different types of diversity experience on democracy outcomes.)

The same overall conclusions that we discerned for learning outcomes also describe the effects of diversity experience on democracy outcomes.

- The analyses show a pattern of consistent, positive relationships between democracy outcomes and students' experiences with diversity, and these effects apply across students in four ethnic/racial groups (African American, white, Latino(a)⁸ and Asian American).
- The results are also consistently positive across multiple democracy outcome measures designed to capture students' citizenship engagement during college, racial/cultural engagement, motivation to take the perspective of others, and the belief that democracy and diversity can be compatible.
- The results are confirmed again in both the national and the local Michigan studies.
- Once again, the controls for students' democracy sentiments when they entered college assure us that the results can reasonably be talked about as having demonstrated effects of experience with diversity.

In the national study, students in all four groups (white, African American, Asian American, and Latino(a)) who had had the most experience with diversity were also the most engaged in various kinds of citizenship activities at the end of college. They were most committed to “influencing the political structure,” “influencing social values,” “helping others in difficulty,” “being involved in programs to clean up the environment,” and “participating in a community action program.” Moreover, since we were able to control for the students' scores on the items that comprise citizenship engagement when they entered college, we know that experience with diverse peers produced an increase in their commitment to citizenship, as reflected in these kinds of activities. Diversity experience also had a clear impact on racial/cultural engagement as indicated by the students' assessments that they had become more “culturally aware and appreciative of cultural differences” as well as more “accepting of persons of different races and cultures.” This effect was also consistent across all four racial/ethnic groups.

The results of the Michigan Student Study further support our claim that diversity experience influences democracy outcomes, in this instance three sentiments that we have argued are particularly important for citizenship in a heterogeneous democracy: perspective taking, the belief that democracy and difference can be compatible, and cultural engagement (learning about different groups in society). White, African American, and Asian American students who had the greatest amount of diversity experience—through classrooms, frequent and positive quality of interaction with diverse peers, greater exposure to multicultural events, and more involvement in intergroup dialogues—increased the most in their motivation to take the perspective of others. After controlling for their scores on these same items that comprise the perspective-taking measure at time of entrance, the students with the greatest amount of diversity experience at the University of Michigan most frequently said that they “try to look at everybody’s side of a disagreement”; do not “find it difficult to see things from the other person’s point of view”; “listen to other people’s arguments”; and believe that there are “two sides to every question” and that they “try to look at them both.”

The positive impact of diversity experience on what we call compatibility of difference and democracy is especially noteworthy because it specifically counters the charge made by some critics of affirmative action that using race as one of many factors in admission is divisive and threatens the commonality so needed in a democracy. This measure speaks directly to that charge. It includes questions that asked students to indicate how similar or different their own racial/ethnic group and other groups are in “important values in life—like values about work and family,” as well as agreement/disagreement with the following four statements that assert the belief that difference brings divisiveness: “The University’s focus on diversity puts too much emphasis on group differences,” “The University’s commitment to diversity fosters more intergroup division than understanding,” “The University’s emphasis

on diversity means that I can't talk honestly about ethnic, racial, and gender issues," and "The emphasis on diversity makes it hard for me to be myself." For a high score on the compatibility measure, students have to perceive a lot of commonality between their own and other racial/ethnic groups and to *disagree* that an emphasis on diversity is divisive. African American, Asian American, and white students with the most experience with diversity expressed the greatest amount of commonality and least often found that diversity brought divisiveness—findings that are in complete opposition to claims frequently made against affirmative action and multicultural education. Since the assessments of commonality between one's own and other racial/ethnic groups were also asked at time of entrance and were used as controls in these analyses, it is reasonable to conclude that experience with diversity increased the students' sense that difference and democracy can be compatible.

Finally, Michigan students who had the most experience with diversity during college were the most culturally engaged, as indicated by their own assessments that they had learned the most "about other racial/ethnic groups during college."

These results repeatedly substantiate that actual experience with diversity fosters civic preparedness for participation in a diverse democracy where cultural competence, capacity to work well with people from various backgrounds, and consideration of multiple points of view are crucially needed.

Students' own statements also attest to learning that difference and commonality can be congenial and to gaining cultural competence skills through their interactions and genuine communication with diverse peers.

The key thing that I have learned is that we all do have a lot of things in common. We can find that commonality, but we can only do that if we are willing to be aware of and respectful of each other's differences. I will carry that with me as I go into corporate life, and hopefully someday into politics as well.

As my generation enters the twenty-first century, we are faced with the challenge of communicating across racial, cultural, and social lines to understand one another in the midst of a multiracial, multi-class society. Naturally, we are all insecure with race relations because we don't want to risk our emotions or offend the opposite party. However, communication is now our only hope. We have to realize that to discuss race may be painful, scrutinizing, and even appalling, but we can be assured of ultimately reaching a better level of communication.

I have practically reinvented myself emotionally, socially, and intellectually in the last four years, primarily due to coming to terms with diversity and how I figure into it. I feel I can now work and be with anyone, and that certainly wasn't true when I came here four years ago. I have gotten leadership skills that I could not have dreamed about when I was in high school

An Educational Experiment in Diverse Democracy

Our expert testimony in the affirmative action cases included research that evaluated the effects of a particular curricular program at the University of Michigan (the Program on Intergroup Relations, IGR), which focuses on civic values, commitments, and capacities. Created by Michigan faculty in 1988 and offered regularly since then, primarily to incoming first-year students, it explicitly incorporates the conditions we have argued are important for diversity to have positive educational benefits: the presence of diverse peers, discontinuity from the precollege background, equality among peers, discussion under rules of civic discourse, and normalization and negotiation of conflict. It offers a sequence of course for undergraduates, beginning with an introductory course on intergroup relations and on conflict and community, and continuing through advanced courses for juniors and seniors.

The courses in IGR involve intergroup dialogues in which stu-

dents from two identity groups (Latinos/as and Anglos, Arabs and Jews, African Americans and whites, women and men, etc.) are guided by trained undergraduate facilitators to talk across race and ethnicity (and across other differences as well) in the truly public way that is needed for a diverse democracy to work. They learn neither to ignore group differences, which many students tend to do in the service of individualism and color blindness, nor to privilege differences as ends in themselves. Benjamin Barber (1989) describes public talk as listening no less than speaking, involving affective as well as cognitive work, drawing people into the world of participation and action, and expressing ideas publicly rather than merely holding them privately.

The research included in the legal cases assessed the impact of the first course in this IGR sequence. It compared two groups of students, those who took the initial course, and a comparison group matched on gender, race/ethnicity, in-state and out-of-state precollege residency, and residence hall on campus. Both groups were part of the overall Michigan Student Study and thus had entrance data; they were both given questionnaires at the end of the first semester and again at the end of the senior year. Altogether 174 students, 87 participants and 87 nonparticipants, were in the study during their first year in college; 81 percent also were in the senior-year longitudinal follow-up study.

The first course reflected the emphasis in the entire program on the conditions that should have positive benefits on democracy outcomes. The participants (and the matched comparison group) came from *diverse backgrounds*. Slightly over a quarter were students of color; a third were men; and, 30 percent grew up in states other than Michigan. For nearly all of the students, this amount of diversity was quite *discrepant with their precollege backgrounds*. *Equality among peers* was assured in the intergroup dialogues that are an intrinsic part of the first course. These intergroup dialogues brought together an equal number of students (approximately

eight) from two different identity groups that have had a history of disagreement over group-relevant experiences and policy issues (Zuñiga and Nagda 1993). For seven weeks, these groups engaged in weekly two-hour structured dialogues under clear *rules of civil discourse* such as listening respectfully to each other, making discussion a safe place for disagreements, disagreeing with ideas rather than with individuals, accepting expressions of emotion as legitimate and helpful, taking responsibility for one's own ideas and feelings by using "I" statements rather than attacking others, maintaining confidentiality for what is said within the group, and being honest rather than playing devil's advocate or other games. The participants were given the task of examining commonalities and differences between and within groups. *Conflict was normalized* through readings on the social functions of conflict, both positive and negative, and through simulations and exercises that taught communication and negotiation skills. (See Zuñiga, Nagda, and Sevig 2002 for more detailed description.)

The participants as seniors, *even after controlling for their responses to the entrance questionnaire*, showed, in comparison with nonparticipants, significantly greater

- Commitment to take the perspectives of others
- Sense of compatibility between difference and democracy as evidenced by sense of commonality in life values with other ethnic/racial groups and by the belief that difference is not necessarily divisive
- Positive evaluations of conflict as indicated, for example, in greater agreement/disagreement that "conflict and disagreements in classroom discussion enrich the learning process," and three other similar statements (some phrased negatively such as "I learned that conflict rarely has constructive consequences")
- Mutuality in learning about own and other groups as reflected in learning about the history and experiences of

other groups as well as about their own group, and participating in activities of other groups as well as activities of their own groups

- Interest in politics
- Racial/cultural engagement
- Participation in campus political groups

The two groups did not differ, however, in how much they had participated in student government or in community service activities. (See Gurin, Nagda, and Lopez 2004 for a detailed presentation of the effects of the IGR on preparation for citizenship over four years of college.)

Research of Other Scholars on Democracy Outcomes

Supportive evidence from other scholars is only now beginning to accumulate. It is not only that scholarship probing how diversity relates to civic education has been extremely limited, but also that until recently social science has given remarkably little attention to the processes by which young people become educated as democratic citizens, with or without considering the issue of diversity. In an introduction to a collection of essays in the *Journal of Social Issues* addressing this neglect, Flanagan and Sherrod (1998) concluded that “research on the developmental correlates of civic competence or the processes by which children become members of political communities has, to say the least, not been a prominent theme in the social sciences” (447).

Recent work on youth political development, which has mostly been carried out with high school youth, shows that youth who participate in volunteer work, organized groups, community service, and political activities are more likely to be active citizens as adults (Flanagan and Sherrod 1998; Youniss and Yates 1997; Yates and Youniss 1999). The lasting impact of participation as a youth

results from learning the organizational practices that are required in adult citizen activities and from establishing a civic identity during an opportune moment in the formation of identity (Youniss, McClellan, and Yates 1997). Civic development is fostered by family values and practices that emphasize social responsibility (Flanagan and Sherrod 1998), by families with higher education and income (Flanagan and Tucker 1999), and by school climates that encourage expression of opinions and identification with the school (Flanagan and Sherrod 1998).

Of course, there is a large body of literature on the impact of college on aspects of student development that relate to civic identity. A major review of college impact studies carried out by Pascarella and Terenzini (1991) showed that higher education fosters altruistic, humanitarian, and civic values, as well as greater tolerance and principled reasoning in judging moral issues (for a different view suggesting that adults with college education and even postcollege education are not more tolerant than less educated Americans, see Jackman and Muha 1984). In the college studies, the weight of the evidence suggests that a statistically significant, if modest, part of the broad-based changes in attitudes, values, and moral reasoning occurring during college can be attributed to the college experience and is not simply a reflection of trends in the larger society (Terenzini et al. 1994). Reviewing national sample studies and a multicity study of whites, African Americans, Latinos(as), and Asian Americans, Bobo and colleagues (2000) substantiate that education fosters more tolerant racial outlooks.

It is important to note that neither the recent research on high school youth nor the longer-standing research on college youth has examined the influence of experience with diversity as a socializing influence for civic preparedness. Studies specifically on the impact of diversity on preparation for citizenship, or what we are calling democracy outcomes, are just beginning to appear in the social science literature. Among these, Hurtado (2001) found that interaction across race/ethnicity, as evident in studying with someone

from a different racial/ethnic background, positively influenced measures of civic engagement. Another national study extended these findings and showed that students with a high proportion of diverse close friends in college reported growth in leadership and cultural knowledge after four years of college (Antonio 2001). Chang and colleagues (2002) further document other studies that have found a link between curricular initiatives as well as interaction with diverse peers and what broadly might be called cultural competence. One of these studies (Chang, Astin, and Kim 2004) found that students who had interacted the most across racial groups also reported that they had grown the most in their ability to get along with people from different races/cultures while being more likely to vote, volunteer, and participate in community action. Further, the results show that, after adjusting for how students saw themselves upon entry into college, the students with the most cross-racial interaction ended college with an increased sense of themselves as leaders and as empathetic with others. These effects of cross-racial interaction persisted, moreover, when Chang and colleagues took account of various personal characteristics of the students at time of entrance and of the same kind of institutional characteristics that our analyses adjusted for as well.

Making deeper friendships and becoming more comfortable in cross-racial relationships because of an initial interaction that lasts over time is especially well demonstrated in an experimental study conducted by Duncan and colleagues (2003).

This study took advantage of the fact that a portion of incoming first-year students at a large midwestern university are randomly assigned roommates. (The remaining students either asked to room with a friend from home or selected singles.) The random assignment provided a natural experiment in which students were either randomly given a roommate of their own or a different racial/ethnic background. Students lived together throughout the first year of college. Responses to questionnaires administered to these students during the first year of college and two and four years later

showed that white students⁹ who were randomly assigned roommates of color were more comfortable than the other white students were with people of other races in their later years of college; they also had more personal contact across race and ethnicity. White students who were randomly assigned African American roommates, in contrast to those who were randomly assigned white roommates, more frequently considered their roommate to be a best friend during the first year of college. Causality is clear in this study. These students were not selecting roommates but simply lived with a person randomly given to them. A year-long living experience with a roommate from a different racial/ethnic background demonstrably affected these students' comfort and abilities to get along across racial lines.

The students at Harvard and University of Michigan law schools who were studied by Orfield and Whitley (2001) related in their subjective evaluations of the impact of diversity that it had affected their "ability to work more effectively and/or get along better with members of other races." Sixty-eight percent of the Harvard law students and 48 percent of the Michigan law students saw a clear, positive impact of this sort. Seventy-six percent of the students in the Whitley et al. (2003) medical school survey reported that experience with diversity helped them work more effectively with those of diverse racial backgrounds.

In the racially/ethnically diverse society that the United States already is, this effect of diversity experience during college augurs well for achieving the understanding, comfort, and integration of both difference and similarities that will be needed to make a diverse democracy work. Studies of racial stereotypes and the role of interracial contact in reducing stereotypes are particularly important in realizing this goal, as stereotypes stand in the way of understanding and stem from and reinforce exaggerated conceptions of difference. The work that we presented to the Supreme Court did not include measures of stereotypes, but a rich research literature on the subject can be found within social psychology.

The amicus brief submitted to the Supreme Court by the American Psychological Association (Brief of Amici Curiae American Psychological Association at 5–6, *Grutter* [No. 02–241]) summarizes the important findings from this literature. The APA draws four basic conclusions.

- First, racial prejudice and stereotypes are widespread in the United States, although they are now less blatant and more unconscious than the old fashioned racism was (Dovidio and Gaertner 2000; Spencer et al. 1998; Blascovich et al. 1997; Devine 1989; Dovidio et al. 1997). That implicit prejudice and stereotypes operate in the unconscious mind does not mean that they do not affect behavior or that they cannot be altered.
- Second, automatic prejudice plays an important role in producing discriminatory behavior and judgments (Fazio and Olson 2003; McConnell and Liebold 2001; von Hippel, Sekaquaptewa, and Vargas 1997; Sekaquaptewa et al. 2003; Dovidio et al. 2002).
- Third, there is clear evidence that implicit prejudice and stereotypes become exaggerated for token minorities in groups. That is the reason that the University of Michigan has stressed the importance of having a “critical mass” of students of color, a topic that we return to below in addressing criticisms of our work and the university’s case.
- Fourth, unconscious prejudice and stereotypes *can* be altered. There is considerable research undertaken recently showing that unconscious stereotyping can be offset or reduced through positive exposure to members of other racial groups (Blair 2002). It is “face to face interaction that . . . is importantly related to reduced prejudice” (Pettigrew and Tropp 2000, 109).

The APA’s analysis of the prevalence, behavioral implications, and alterations of unconscious prejudice and stereotypes is com-

pletely consistent with the emphasis that we, and other scholars, have placed on *actual experience* with diverse others. If our students are to learn how to understand each other and work together across race and ethnicity, as preparation for citizen and leadership roles in a diverse democracy, they must have curricular and cocurricular opportunities and encouragement for that to happen. It is not simply the number of years of schooling that is correlated with reduced stereotyping, but rather the kind of schooling that students have been afforded.

Finally, the extensive study of students at selective institutions conducted by Bowen and Bok (1998) supports the evidence we have presented on the long-term impact of college diversity experience on democracy outcomes. Bowen and Bok show, for example, that nearly half of the white students and over half of the African American students in the 1976 cohort who had attended diverse, selective institutions reported in the later follow-up study that their undergraduate experience had been of considerable value in “developing their ability to work with, and get along with, people of different races and cultures.” The percentages who claimed this effect were even greater among the 1989 cohort of students attending selective, diverse institutions: 63 percent of the white graduates and 70 percent of the African American graduates. The Bowen and Bok study further shows that the long-term benefits of a diverse student body were evident not only in terms of the graduates’ self-assessed capacity to work with diverse others and of academic and economic outcomes for individuals but also in terms of leadership in diverse communities and in contributions to social service organizations. African American men in particular who had attended selective colleges were likely as adults to be involved in civic activities in their communities—more so than white men who had attended the same colleges, and more so than African American men who had gone to less selective institutions. While these findings are not direct evidence that experience with diversity produces civic

engagement after college, they do show a positive impact of attending institutions that were employing affirmative action policies and procedures to achieve diverse student bodies.

How Diversity Experience Affects Students

We have seen in the analyses we carried out of the national and local Michigan data and in the research of other scholars, much of it summarized in social science amicus briefs to the Supreme Court, that experience with diverse peers has many positive benefits for students. In the period following the Supreme Court decision, research will increasingly turn to understanding the *processes* by which these effects occur. There are already a few studies on processes, all of which emphasize the crucial importance of friendships, personal relationships, and sharing of stories and experiences across race/ethnicity.

Two studies carried out on the Program on Intergroup Relations examined what aspects of the courses—content (as presented through lectures and readings), and active learning techniques (as presented through experiential exercises and daily writing in a reflection journal)—accounted for the effects on learning and democracy outcomes. (See Lopez, Gurin, and Nagda 1998; Nagda, Gurin, and Lopez 2003.) In general, both content and active learning techniques were influential, but active learning techniques were especially important in the recommendations students made about what should be done to deal with intergroup conflicts that sometimes take place on college campuses (Lopez et al. 1998). Students who were the most involved in classroom exercises and journal reflections were the most likely to endorse institutional approaches for solving intergroup conflicts. Actual practice in analyzing simulated campus conflicts and exploring actions through role playing and other active learning exercises were crucial for going beyond the simplest, most individual solutions. Lectures and readings *alone*

cannot provide this kind of learning. Kolb (1984), an important theorist of active learning, says that the cyclical nature of learning in which reflection, dialogue, and action reinforce each other can be generated by having students bring their lived experiences into the classroom and subjecting them to reflection and experimentation, as well as by taking what they learn in class to the outside world for confirmation, disconfirmation, and refinement of theory.

Students attest to the importance of learning from each other through open discussion.

Listening and doing things together—those are the keys.

You have to be in a multi-cultural/racial class of students who are willing to be open-minded and honest with each other. They have to listen to each other and work, discuss, and be together. Professors have to be ready to make that happen.

By laying race out on the table and talking straight with others who are different from you, you become aware of how little you understood before, and sensitivity is formed. This can be done in classes, like this class. It can be done in the residence halls. But it has to be done.

A qualitative study, conducted by Anna Yeakley (1998) with students who took the IGR courses at the University of Michigan, also provides insight into the processes by which intergroup dialogue affects students. She focused on both positive and negative impact, and found two important results. First, the majority of the changes that the students said they had undergone in intergroup dialogues were positive. Second and more importantly, it was the extent to which students established intimate contact with diverse peers that distinguished positive from negative outcomes. Intimate contact was indicated by depth of personal sharing of their life stories, of reactions to each other, and of emotions engendered in the classroom discussions. The importance of intimacy has been recognized

ever since Allport wrote on contact and prejudice (1954), although contact theorists have not always specified it in measurable behavioral terms. Yeakley stresses that intimate contact goes beyond merely knowing others as individuals and involves in-depth personal sharing and self-disclosure of group-related experiences. Two students talk about such personal sharing, and especially about the importance of sharing emotions:

To have people tell you how they feel about something, it just makes you empathize, like you know the person and not just a name.

With personal experience, you can be as emotional as you want to be, because it's your emotions, and we understand that. And, you are a real person who had a real experience.

Yeakley emphasizes that self-disclosure in personal sharing does not happen unless interaction in a class is frequent, direct, involves listening as well as talking, and is respectful and inquiring rather than critical and judgmental.

The importance of personal sharing is also seen in a study of the student facilitators of the intergroup dialogues who are an intrinsic part of the IGR courses. Before the facilitators actually lead an intergroup dialogue, they enroll in a semester-long training course that meets weekly for three hours. Then, during the semester that they facilitate a dialogue, they also enroll in another course that provides close supervision, group discussion of effective and ineffective dialogue processes, and advanced readings on intergroup relations. Carolyn Vasquez-Scalera (1999) studied the experience of facilitation across four years of the IGR, fall 1992 through winter 1996. The student facilitators consistently stressed that the effect of the facilitation experience resulted from being part of a learning community in which personal, emotional, and experiential learning were nurtured, along with traditional kinds of academic learning.

The importance of personal sharing is supported by recent research on intimate relationships in settings other than classrooms—in families, friendships in adult life, work settings (Aron et al. 1991, 1992, 1997; McAdams 1988; Reis and Shaver 1988). This research defines intimacy as sharing innermost feelings, being validated and understood by others, and validating and understanding others. The role of personal sharing is also supported by research on intergroup attitudes that is reviewed by Pettigrew (1998). He highlights the central importance of friendships involving personal sharing with people of a different race, religion, class, or culture in accounting for positive intergroup attitudes. Such friendships, he argues, allow the development of empathy between people with different life experiences.

Is it possible, or even appropriate, for college classrooms to provide a medium for this kind of personal sharing and self-disclosure? Some faculty will not see this as their responsibility. Some would not know how to incorporate discussion that involves sharing of life experiences and emotions, even if they thought it was educationally beneficial. Some faculty disapprove of personal sharing and emotions in academic classrooms. Still, other faculty are comfortable with providing opportunities for these more personal and emotional aspects of learning, and when they do, a growing body of research confirms that sharing, reflection, and dialoguing (especially when it is integrated with content through lectures, readings, and didactic learning) can be a powerful educational tool. Moreover, as we have repeatedly stressed, students also learn from each other in the informal campus world, and it is there that structured opportunities for intergroup dialogue involving personal sharing, self-disclosure, and emotions can be extremely influential.

Answering Our Critics

We submitted our expert testimony containing our theoretical rationale and the empirical evidence in December 1998. Although

the Center for Individual Rights offered no rebuttal witness and conceded the educational value of diversity in the two cases at the district court, it did submit critiques of our work that were conducted by the National Association of Scholars (NAS), a national organization of politically conservative academics. The critiques were appended to amicus briefs that the NAS provided for the CIR appeal to the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals, and to the Supreme Court. Those critiques (Wood and Sherman 2001, 2003; Lerner and Nagai 2001, 2003; and some others by opponents of affirmative action) have raised important and interesting issues about the educational value of diversity to which we now turn. We responded to these critiques on Michigan's website (Gurin 2001, 2003; Gurin, Gurin, and Matlock 2003), and we address them below by asking and answering a series of questions.¹⁰

Why focus on the experiences students have with diversity? Isn't the controversy about racial and ethnic composition in the study body?

The key conclusion emerging from our work and the work of other social scientists is that it is *actual experience* with diverse peers that is important for educational outcomes. The University of Michigan has a deliberate policy, not only of building a diverse student body, but also of promoting diversity experiences for students that in turn are related to educational outcomes. This is not a policy of simply recruiting a diverse student body and then neglecting the intellectual environment in which students interact. Like all resources, structural diversity must be used intelligently to fulfill its potential.

Some critics in amicus briefs to the court argued that the presence of ethnically and racially diverse students must *by itself* be sufficient for achieving desired outcomes if the university policies were to be justified. But if that were true, then having good buildings, high faculty salaries, and good libraries would all be sufficient to ensure a good education. No one with the responsibility to run

a university would make such an argument, precisely because the nature of educational activities and the extent to which students avail themselves of these resources are crucial to achieving an excellent education.

Justice Powell's decisive statement, providing the diversity rationale for the use of race in the *Bakke* case (312), made clear that actual interaction with diverse peers, and not their mere presence on the campus, is precisely how diversity affects students. He included in his opinion a quotation from William Bowen, then president of Princeton University, to that effect.

The president of Princeton University has described some of the benefits derived from a diverse student body: A great deal of learning occurs informally. It occurs through interactions among students of both sexes; of different races, religions, and backgrounds; who come from cities and rural areas, from various states and countries; who have a wide variety of interests, talents, and perspectives; and who are able, directly or indirectly, to learn from their differences and to stimulate one another to reexamine even their most deeply held assumptions about themselves and their world. As a wise graduate of ours observed in commenting on this aspect of the educational process, "People do not learn very much when they are surrounded only by the likes of themselves." (Bowen 1977, 9)

Our emphasis on diversity experiences follows the logic of Justice Powell as to how a diverse student body improves understanding and personal growth. The rich body of research on interracial contact supports the importance of actual interaction, especially when it occurs between members of equal status groups that have common goals, and when the interaction is based on cooperation rather than competition and is endorsed and legitimated by authorities. In these conditions, members of different groups can get to know each other as individuals (Allport 1954; Amir 1976; Cook 1984; Pettigrew 1998; Stephan and Stephan 2001). Not sur-

prisingly, research on higher education also shows that institutions must create opportunities for students to have these kinds of interactions. The University of Michigan is one of those institutions that has created opportunities in classes and in the informal student environment for interaction of diverse students to affect student learning and preparation for participation in a democratic society.

If racial and ethnic diversity isn't sufficient by itself, is it important to defend policies to assure that it exists in a university? Do universities have to have students from diverse backgrounds to produce educational benefits for students?

Some of the critics of the university's policies argue, in effect, that a student can have experience with diversity without diverse others (Wood and Sherman 2001, 2003). The critics seem to believe that any effects we demonstrated could result simply from readings, lectures, and teaching *about* race and ethnicity. We have shown, especially in the national study, that the larger effects come from interaction with diverse peers in the informal educational world of the campus. Moreover, we have shown in the Michigan studies, where we know much more about what diversity in the classroom means, that courses that cover content knowledge about racial and ethnic groups also generally attract diverse students. We know that the courses that met the requirement in the College of Letters, Sciences, and Arts to take at least one course that covers race and ethnicity were composed of diverse students. The Michigan measure of classroom diversity is actually a combination, therefore, of course content about race and interaction with diverse peers in the classroom.

We also know as teachers of courses that address race and ethnicity that learning from peers and especially from diverse peers is vitally important in our undergraduate classroom. In a first-year seminar on groups and community that Patricia Gurin has taught for several years, a particularly poignant class event revealed the power of real interaction with diverse peers.

The class focused on the cultural value of individualism and the role of groups within an individualistic culture. In general, students find the idea of groups a bit uncomfortable. They long to be just individuals, which, of course, they are even as they are also members of race, class, gender, age, geographic, religious, and other groups. In this class session, a white woman student who had grown up in a homogeneously white town in Michigan expressed, with considerable emotion, that she was tired of being categorized as white.

I'm just an individual. No one knows if I hold similar beliefs to those of other white students just by looking at me. I hate being seen just as white.

She ended in tears. An African American male student who had grown up in a virtually all-white city in Connecticut replied as he walked toward her across the classroom.

I just want to be an individual also. But every day as I walk across this campus—just as I am walking across this room right now—I am categorized. No one knows what my thoughts are, or if my thoughts align with other African American students. They just see me as a black male. And at night, they often change their pace to stay away from me. The point is—groups do matter. They matter in my life and (as he approached the other student whose hand he then took), they matter in your life.

There was silence in the room. The students learned about the meaning of groups and the meaning of individuals in a way that they won't soon forget.

This could not have been taught from a lecture. Real interaction with diverse others in a classroom made this learning powerful and indelible.

This conclusion is supported by research of other scholars, summarized in the amicus brief of the National Education Association

(Brief of Amici Curiae National Education Association at 8, *Grutter* [No. 02–241]), as well as by our research and teaching experience.

How much is enough? Even if affirmative action is needed for the current amount of diversity at the University, is that amount of diversity *enough*? Is the current probability of interacting with diverse peers achievable in a race-blind admission policy?

It is impossible for social science to provide a precise answer *to the question of what level of diversity is necessary to achieve positive benefits*. It is possible, however, to show how changing the admissions policy to be race-blind would have markedly affected the experience of both white and underrepresented minority students. Figure 1 shows that under a race-blind admissions policy, the opportunity for a white student to interact with at least three underrepresented students is dramatically *decreased*, and essentially disappears in *small* educational settings, such as a first-year seminar, student government, intramural sports teams, and student activity groups. Figure 2 shows that the probability of an underrepresented minority student being the *only one* in particular educational settings is dramatically *increased* under race-blind admissions. We have emphasized these particular probabilities because research in social psychology demonstrates over many studies that solos (the only one) and tokens (a tiny minority) are highly visible, evaluated in extreme ways, and perceived in stereotyped ways. This research has also shown that majority group members are prone to stereotypic evaluations in situations where they greatly outnumber the number of minority individuals. Interacting with at least three minority individuals allows majority group members to see that not all minority individuals are alike.

In addition to changing student experiences, a few conclusions are clear from understanding how the campus would have changed under a race-blind policy. First, the University of Michigan has

achieved significant educational benefits from the levels of underrepresented minority students on campus that have resulted from using race as one of many factors in admissions (ranging between 12 percent and 16 percent of the undergraduate student body in recent years, and 25 percent if Asian American students are included). Second, Michigan's level of diversity under its race-conscious admission policies has not achieved all of the potential benefits available to the university. Increasing the level of diversity would provide additional opportunities for interactions in classrooms and informal settings, which are critical to the success of the mission of higher education. Third, Michigan's admission policies that were challenged in court produced percentages of underrepresented minorities that are far from achieving the composition that social psychologists have found to be the ideal—balanced ratios of group members—nor was anyone from the university advocating balanced ratios (Mullen and Hu 1989). Fourth, it is clear that the educational benefits we have demonstrated were much at risk in the legal challenge to which the University of Michigan responded.

What about other kinds of diversity? Why is racial/ethnic diversity so important?

Other kinds of diversity *are* important. The Law School and the Undergraduate Admission Offices recruit and admit students from many different kinds of backgrounds: international, rural, working-class, precollege residency in Michigan from counties other than the five southeastern counties that comprise most of the university's undergraduate students, states other than Michigan, and states other than the other five in which most of Michigan's out-of-state students grew up. The university's effort to enroll students from all of these various backgrounds diversifies what would otherwise be a student body predominantly from the United States, urban settings, the state of Michigan (and the states of New York, Illinois, California, New Jersey, and Ohio), and middle-class and

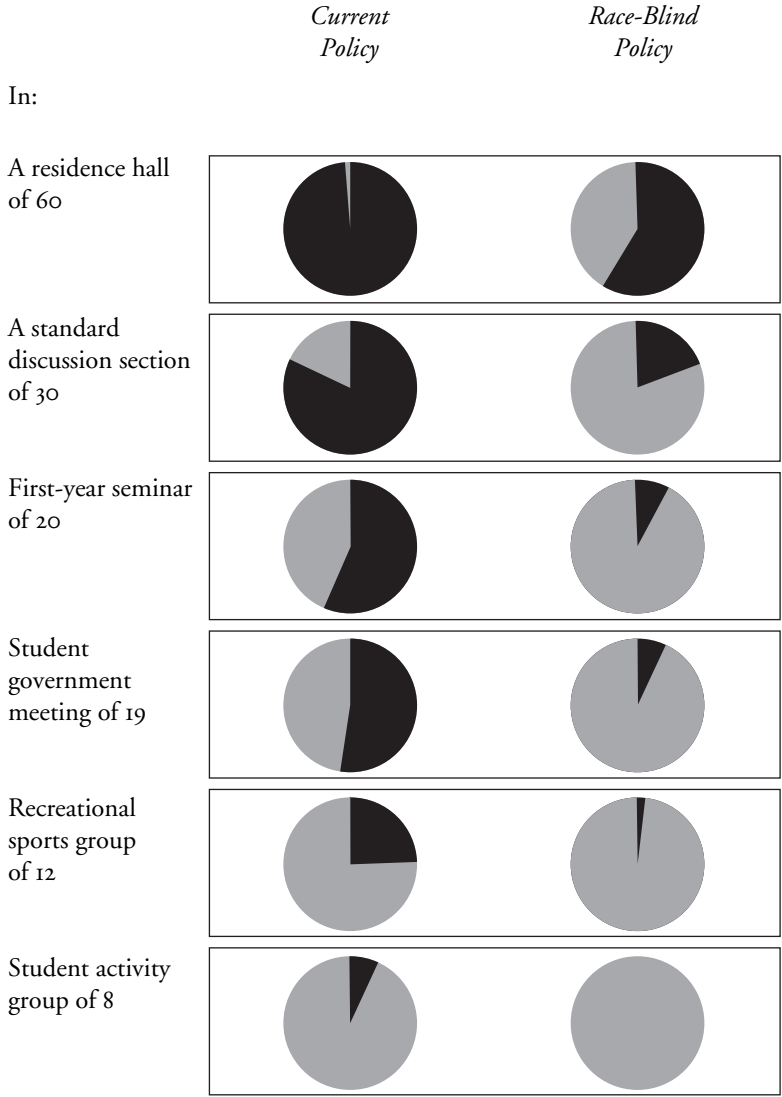


FIGURE 1. A day in the life of a white undergraduate
 Area in black shows the probability of interacting with
 at least 3 underrepresented minority students

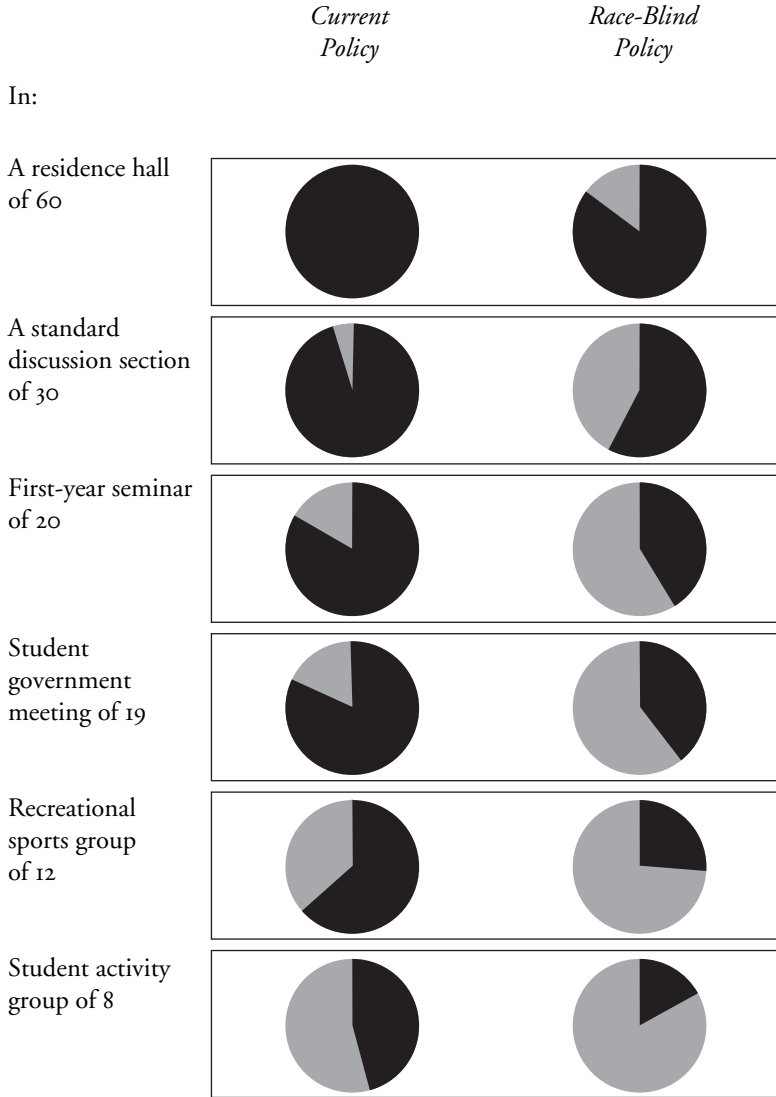


FIGURE 2. A day in the life of an underrepresented minority student

Area in black shows the probability of not being a solo:
The only underrepresented minority student

upper-middle-class economic situations. Admissions staff also recruit students with a wide range of talents and interests within all of these demographic categories.

Race, however, is *the* major social divide in the United States. Thomas Sugrue (1999) documents racial segregation and isolation in contemporary United States. He points out that even as the United States becomes increasingly diverse, the vast majority of African Americans and Latinos(as) are concentrated in certain regions, within those regions often in certain states, and within those states in particular urban areas. Looking just at the state of Michigan, where two-thirds of the university's undergraduates grow up, Sugrue further documents widespread within-state segregation.

This concentration of minority groups in particular areas in Michigan means that the vast majority of Michigan's eighty-three counties have tiny minority populations. Moreover, within the eleven metropolitan areas where minority groups reside in Michigan, residential segregation virtually assures that most whites and African Americans interact minimally in their daily lives.

The history of race, ethnicity, and education in the United States, described in depth by Lewis (in this volume), coupled with the profound racial isolation that continues to be the experience of most Americans and certainly of the students who come to the University of Michigan, makes racial/ethnic diversity unlike any other dimension of diversity in our nation.

Don't race-conscious policies and a focus on diversity have harmful effects as well? Doesn't a focus on race/ethnicity stigmatize students of color?

Some critics of affirmative action in higher education argue that it undermines the performance of minority students, and causes them to be stigmatized, become demoralized, and drop out of college.

In their classic book, *The Shape of the River*, Bowen and Bok

(1998) demonstrate just the opposite. African American students were not demoralized, nor did they drop out of college at highly selective colleges where affirmative action had been in place more often than at less selective colleges. Bowen and Bok show that African American students *within every SAT interval* graduated at higher rates from elite schools than African American students attending nonselective schools. They also show that African Americans at highly selective institutions were just as likely as whites at these schools to attend the most competitive professional schools and to become doctors, lawyers, and business executives. Moreover, these kinds of successes characterized African American students who graduated from highly selective institutions more than their African American peers, with comparable SAT scores, who graduated from less selective four-year institutions. All of these findings in *Shape of the River* contradict the idea that African American students who attended the most selective institutions were harmed by the affirmative action policies that operated in the admission of some of them. African American students were not better off educationally in less selective institutions where the average SAT scores matched their own.

What do students of color themselves think of affirmative action? A number of studies show that they are aware that this policy allows white students to doubt that they, the minority, are as capable as majority students. Yet, while they acknowledge that others may doubt their abilities, these studies also show that students of color believe that other people doubt their abilities *regardless* of affirmative action. In other words, they understand that it is their minority status itself—not affirmative action policies—that sometimes causes them to be stigmatized (Downing et al. 2002).

In the Michigan Student Study, African American students in particular were aware that they were stigmatized by others, both other students and faculty members. For example, 59 percent of the African American seniors (in contrast to 26 percent of the Latino/a, 14 percent of the Asian American, and 15 percent of the white

seniors) agreed that “I have encountered faculty and students who feel that I don’t have a right to be here.” In response to another question, only 27 percent of the African American seniors (in contrast to 76 percent of the Latino/a, 70 percent of the Asian American, and 84 percent of the white seniors) felt that the Michigan climate reflected “quite a bit” or “a great deal” of “respect by white faculty for students of color.” However, this latter question was also asked on the entrance survey. The responses indicate that a large majority of African American students did not *expect* to encounter much respect from white faculty, even before they had any experience in the university. When asked about what they expected to find at Michigan, only 39 percent of the African American students (in contrast to 70 percent of the Latino/a, 73 percent of the Asian American, and 86 percent of the white entering students) said that they expected “quite a bit” or “a great deal” of “respect by white faculty for students of color.” Although there is a 12 percent increase in feelings of devaluation among African American students over the four years of college, the feelings they expressed as seniors were largely a function of what they thought would happen at Michigan when they came as entering freshmen. For most African American students, feelings of devaluation do not suddenly appear in college because of affirmative action. (There is also, of course, no evidence that the 12 percent increase among African Americans in feelings of faculty disrespect can be attributed to affirmative action, or any other particular cause.)

Psychologist Faye Crosby (2004), in a thorough analysis of reactions to affirmative action, draws conclusions from her work and the research of other scholars on stigmatization, conducted both in the laboratory and in actual employment and higher education settings.

- There is evidence that people stigmatize recipients of affirmative action *unless* it is made very clear that these recipients are highly competent.

- Stigmatization does negatively affect performance and self-confidence, although stigmatization and stereotyping of women and persons of color exist even when there is no reference to affirmative action. Stigmatization and stereotyping are part of racism in the United States.
- Self-doubts among recipients of affirmative action exist but are not pronounced or widespread. Creation of self-doubts from affirmative action is generally not the devastating problem that some famous writers—Richard Rodriguez (1981), Shelby Steele (1990), and Stephen Carter (1991) and Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas in his dissenting opinion in *Grutter v. Bollinger* say that it has been in their lives.
- Studies of minority college/university students, of minority workers in employment settings, and of minority adults in national sample surveys show in general that they approve of affirmative action (though definitely not of racial/ethnic quotas), believe they have benefited from it, and do not feel stigmatized from the presence of gender-sensitive or race-sensitive policies.

There is a clear message in Crosby's thorough analysis of the pluses and minuses of race-sensitive policies. Perhaps the most critical for higher education is the significance of being absolutely clear that students admitted under such policies are completely qualified to perform, to graduate from undergraduate schools, to obtain higher education, to achieve in later life, and to contribute to society. That is certainly the case at the University of Michigan.

Don't affirmative action and a focus on diversity produce racial/ethnic hostility on college campuses? Aren't these race-conscious policies inevitably divisive?

We have argued that racial/ethnic diversity in an institution increases the likelihood that students will have experience with diversity in classrooms and in intergroup interactions that are pos-

itive, cooperative, and personal. One frequent criticism of affirmative action is that it does not foster these positive interactions, but on the contrary creates a racial campus climate of intergroup hostility, tension, and conflict.

This criticism was a major point made by Robert Lerner and Althea Nagai in an amicus brief filed by the National Association of Scholars (NAS). Lerner and Nagai argue that affirmative action and a campus focus on multiculturalism and diversity have negative effects on intergroup relationships because they heighten the salience of the boundaries between groups. They also claim that affirmative action subverts the most important precondition for having a positive impact from intergroup interaction—that the group participants be equal in status—because they contend that differences in average SAT scores between African Americans and white students make equality in relationships impossible. They conclude that “if one applies the notion of equal status contact properly, achieving social diversity by means of racial and ethnic preferences will not only fail to foster intergroup cooperation but will enhance mutual suspicion and hostility between racial and ethnic groups” (47).

Despite years of controversy about affirmative action and its impact, and the abundance of anecdotal evidence brought to this debate, there is little systematic, quantitative evidence on the nature of intergroup relationships on college campuses in the United States. A number of questions in the surveys of the Michigan Student Study (MSS) directly address the issue of campus climate and personal intergroup relationships. The students’ responses to these questions do not support the critics’ views of the negative state of intergroup relationships on such campuses, at least not on the Michigan campus.

In general, the great majority of white students as well as students of color feel that their relationships with other racial/ethnic groups on campus have been predominantly positive. About 90 percent of Asian American, Latino/a, and white students, and

about 80 percent of African American students agreed as seniors that “My relationships with students from different racial/ethnic groups at the University have been positive.” Most compelling are the students’ responses to a question that asked them about their relationships with the racial/ethnic group they interacted with the most on the Michigan campus. The question presented a list of positive and negative intergroup interactions (e.g., “studied together,” “shared our personal feelings and problems,” “had guarded, cautious interactions,” “had tense, somewhat hostile interactions”) and asked students to what extent these types of interactions characterized their relationships with students in that group.

The quality of intergroup interactions that emerged from the responses to this question was strikingly positive, particularly between white, Asian American, and Latino/a students. White students view their relationships with Asian American and Latino/a students, and Asian Americans and Latinos/as view their relationships with whites, as involving considerable cooperation and personal sharing, as well as very little hostility and tension. Relationships that white students had with African American students were somewhat less personal than their relationships with other students of color, but very few white students felt that their interactions with African American students were negative. African American students reported that their relationships with white students were somewhat ambivalent, with approximately the same percentage of African American students characterizing their relationships with white students as negative and as positive.

The greater distance in the relationships between African American and white students is not surprising, reflecting as it does the legacy of our long troubled national history of black-white relationships. More surprising is that so few white students, less than 5 percent, experienced these relationships as cautious, tense, or hostile. These findings question the claim of critics of diversity that affirmative action has poisoned the racial climate on campuses, that

in particular it has evoked negative, hostile reactions of white students because of their feelings of resentment at so-called reverse discrimination, and their supposed negative campus experiences with “unqualified” students admitted because of racial preference. None of these claims are supported by systematic data from students’ experiences in intergroup relations on campus.

The students’ responses to other questions from the MSS provide further evidence that discredits the claim that affirmative action has produced a white student “backlash.” While the majority of white students, as well as students of color, agree in principle that racial/ethnic inequalities exist in higher education and that universities have a responsibility to address these inequities, it is true that there are great racial/ethnic group differences in responding to specific questions about addressing inequality in higher education. Many fewer white students than students of color support specific affirmative action policies that universities like the University of Michigan have undertaken to address these inequalities. However, these great group differences are apparent in the way that students think about such policies when they entered the University of Michigan and thus before they encountered the campus diversity produced by affirmative action. For the white students at Michigan, 90 percent of whom come from segregated neighborhoods and high schools, this means that their lack of support for affirmative action derives primarily from their precollege social environments and the ways in which affirmative action issues have been framed in the public debate, and not from negative experiences with diversity during their college years. For this reason, it is important to review longitudinal data on students, to understand how students change their initial perspectives, often adopting a more complex understanding of racial issues in society. There is little support in the MSS findings for the criticism that affirmative action policies to achieve diversity cause a “backlash,” particularly among white students, because of their interactions with what the opponents of affirmative action consider unqualified minority students.

The MSS results in fact show the opposite, that the changes that do occur after four years at Michigan are in the direction of *greater support* for affirmative action student admission policies. This is true for all groups of students. Their attitude changes on admission criteria are particularly relevant since they were the focus of the legal challenge to affirmative action in higher education. All in all, the picture of intergroup relationships on the Michigan campus that emerges from the MSS, and the role of affirmative action in affecting these relationships, do not support the negative picture presented by the critics of affirmative action.

The charge of extensive racial hostility, tension, and conflict on campuses where affirmative action is used in admissions is not borne out in our systematic survey of Michigan. A critical question is why the negative view prevails. It persists, we believe, because there has been so little systematic research and because journalists, critics of affirmative action, and ordinary citizens have reverted to using anecdotes, frequently repeating anecdotes that have made their way from one newspaper, television, or magazine article to another.

Responses to another MSS question further illuminate the question of why the negative view prevails so widely and over time. A question on “racial climate” presented students with a list of phrases and asked them the extent to which each of them was descriptive of the University of Michigan campus. Slightly over one-quarter of the white students responded that there was “quite a bit” or “a great deal” of “interracial tension on campus.” Although this does not indicate widespread perception of racial tension, it is considerably more than the 4 percent of white students who actually reported “tense, somewhat hostile interactions” in their own relationships with students of color. Their responses reveal that the fairly common belief that there is widespread racial tension on our college campuses is overgeneralization from anecdotal and focus group research, rather than systematic survey research, and from highly publicized ugly racial incidents that have

occurred on some campuses, rather than reflections of the students' personal day-to-day experiences with interracial relationships.

Even if racial tension on university campuses were greater than the MSS data suggest, we find it somewhat puzzling that critics of affirmative action have focused so much on this issue. One should not be surprised that *perception of some racial tension* exists at Michigan or that such perceptions might be expressed by more students on campuses where commitment to racial/ethnic diversity is strong. Nearly all of Michigan's white students and half of the African American students came to Michigan (at the time of the MSS) with practically no experience with diverse peers. They had little to anchor their perceptions. Nor is it surprising that *perception of racial tension* increases somewhat over the four years in college on campuses, including the University of Michigan, where the issue of race is highly salient. If perceptions of racial tension had resulted in a balkanized campus where students did not develop positive relationships across race, these perceptions should be a serious concern for Michigan. But, as already indicated, this did not occur at Michigan, and friendships across race actually increased at Michigan over the four years.

Finally, if perception of racial tension is viewed as something to be avoided at all costs, what is the answer? Is it to return to segregated schools? It is easy for people to imagine that racial tension did not exist before affirmative action, and further that racial tension would simply disappear now, with no consequences to society, if diverse groups of Americans did not work and live closely together, and if affirmative action were not instrumental in bringing diverse groups together in our nation's most selective educational institutions.

The amicus brief submitted on behalf of the university in the affirmative action cases by former military generals and admirals challenges that point of view. Although the armed forces became integrated in 1948, there was great disparity in numbers between the officer and enlisted corps up to and through the Vietnam War.

The military amici curiae stress how negative that disparity was for the military's capacity to wage the Vietnam War.

They state that the small percentage of officers of color "and the discrimination perceived to be its cause led to low morale and heightened racial tension. The danger that this created was not theoretical, as the Vietnam era demonstrates. As that war continued, the armed forces suffered increased racial polarization, pervasive disciplinary problems, and racially motivated incidents in Vietnam and on posts around the world. . . . The military's leadership 'recognized that its racial problem was so critical that it was on the verge of self-destruction.'" (Brief of Amici Curiae Lt. Gen. Julius W. Becton, Jr., et al. at 6–7, *Grutter* [No. 02–241, 6–7].)

The example of the military demonstrates that ignoring racial issues, however harmonious race relationships might have appeared to be until the military faced a major crisis such as the Vietnam War, actually produced profound racial tension and polarization. Affirmative action that was undertaken in the armed forces academies and in ROTC following the Vietnam War has resulted in a larger proportion of officers of color and a much more realistic, healthy state of affairs. Something is clearly awry when some Americans long for the days when racial tension was not perceived but nonetheless was felt—at least by Americans of color—and largely ignored.

Societies all around the world are being threatened by racial and ethnic cleavages. Surely, college students today need to learn how to work, live, and be leaders in a diverse society lest our own heterogeneous society and democracy become as hopelessly divided as many are in the world today.

Does racial/ethnic diversity foster diversity of ideas and viewpoints? Isn't a focus on racial/ethnic diversity encouraging racial/ethnic stereotypes?

One argument that many critics of affirmative action have made against the diversity rationale has been to deny that the presence of

multiple and different racial/ethnic groups on campus actually brings multiple and diverse viewpoints and perspectives to the college environment. The argument that there are no race-related differences in ideas is most strikingly evident in the opinion given by two of the three-person panel of the Fifth Circuit Court in the Hopwood case: “the use of race, in and of itself, to choose students simply achieves a student body that looks different. Such a criterion is no more rational on its own terms than would be choices based upon the physical size or blood types of individuals” (*Hopwood v. University of Texas*, 78 F.3d 932 (5th Cir. 1996), cert. Denied, 518 U.S. 1033, 950).

This argument is often buttressed by a moralistic criticism of the proponents of diversity (and of affirmative action to achieve diversity) who claim that race and ethnicity are related to intellectual points of view. Critics of affirmative action argue that to say that racial groups differ in viewpoints is to stereotype such groups.

Wood and Sherman (2001) illustrate this two-pronged argument, namely that (1) race does not provide significant viewpoint diversity, and (2) race-conscious policies invidiously stereotype minority groups. Commenting on all the cultural, social, and technological forces that they feel have fostered the homogenization of our nation and muted the significance of regional, class, and other societal divisions, Wood and Sherman conclude that “all these factors greatly diminish the impact that racial diversity will have on the intellectual, cultural, and social diversity of the student body. The same historical and social forces have also made it much more difficult . . . for universities to engage in racial stereotyping. . . . Presumably, Powell believed that racial diversity could serve to some extent as a proxy for viewpoint diversity. But it can do so only to the extent that different races have stereotypically different viewpoints” (132–33).

It is ironic and disingenuous for critics of affirmative action to charge the university with promoting group stereotypes when we argue that positive interracial experiences promote an appreciation

of *both* differences and commonalities between members of different racial and ethnic groups. Our research is part of a fifty-year tradition of social psychological theory and research on interracial contact, a body of work that has demonstrated that positive and equal interracial contacts serve to diminish stereotypical thinking. In the standard definition in the literature, “stereotypes are beliefs about the characteristics, attributes, and behaviors of members of certain groups” (Hilton and von Hippel 1996, 240). While stereotypes can be positive, the focus in the literature has been on negative group stereotypes, and on the relationship between these stereotypes and prejudice and discrimination. In assigning negative characteristics to an out-group, stereotypes tend to be overly generalized and simplistic and to ignore the individual variability of members of out-groups. Instead, stereotypes exaggerate the homogeneity of out-group members. Positive, equal contact with members of an out-group serves to challenge the negativity, simplicity, overgeneralization, and homogeneity that are the essence of anti-group stereotypes.

In charging that those who support affirmative action foster racial stereotypes, Wood and Sherman are well aware that research at the University of Michigan is part of a tradition that argues just the opposite. What they claim is that it is inconsistent to say that interracial contact reduces group stereotyping and also argue that this contact produces an understanding of different group perspectives. In their words, we “can’t have it both ways” (Wood and Sherman 2001, 133).

Contrary to their beliefs, positive intergroup relations foster recognition of different perspectives held by racial groups, *and* produce a more complex and nuanced view of members of one’s own group(s) and of the members of other groups. It is not inconsistent to say that this complexity involves an understanding of both the different perspectives that come from the different life experiences of racial and ethnic groups in the United States, and the similarities between groups that reflect their many shared experiences. This

complexity further involves an appreciation of the individual variability of members of both one's own and other racial/ethnic groups. We learn how we differ in ways we had not thought about, and we learn how we are similar in ways we had previously stereotypically assumed groups are different.

The charge that we are fostering stereotypic thinking about groups when we talk of groups having different viewpoints and perspectives ignores the fact that the different group perspectives we (and others) refer to are completely unrelated to the types of group differences that typically comprise the stereotypic views of minority groups in our society. The different perspectives that we contend students learn about from meaningful interracial experiences are those that are shaped by the experiences and histories of different racial/ethnic groups in our society. These different perspectives pertain to perceptions of our society, the individual's relation to society, evaluations of the equity in our society and in various institutions (the courts, police, educational system, economic and political institutions), and the systemic supports and barriers that shape our individual lives and affect the role of individual effort for success and failure. Encountering these differences in viewpoint has a special meaning when they come from students of different backgrounds and life experiences. What students learn from each other is not only that different viewpoints on these matters exist but also that some of the basic cultural assumptions in our society—assumptions that individuals often take as givens and are not questioned—are not such obvious truths after all but are affected by varied backgrounds, social experiences, and positions in society. These varied experiences are what make interracial relationships an impetus for learning about others and for examining and learning about oneself.

These differences in views about society are completely distinct in character from the assumed group differences that are generally thought to comprise stereotypes of groups. Group stereotypes are usually negative, and they ascribe characteristics or traits to mem-

bers of other groups that serve to distance “them” from “us.” When applied to groups that possess lower power, status, and resources in our society, stereotypes serve to justify inequality by attributing it to defects in the personal and value characteristics and traits of the members of the lower power/status groups rather than to structured arrangements in the social system that perpetuate inequality (Jost and Banaji 1994; Bobo 2001). This has been strikingly documented with respect to the crude stereotypes of African Americans that have been prevalent in our culture throughout our history.

It is, therefore, neither inconsistent nor surprising that proponents of diversity have always argued that the increased understanding of other groups that comes from positive interracial interactions involves appreciation of *both* the differences that emanate from different life experiences *and* the commonalities that previously stereotypes had treated as different.

These differences and commonalities are illustrated in a number of findings from the Michigan Student Study. In a particularly striking example of differences, the MSS found that students of different racial/ethnic backgrounds, especially African American and white students, differ greatly in their responses to a number of questions that tap their views of the *equity* of societal arrangements in the United States. This is evident in their views of the current state of racial justice in our nation. While a majority of all Michigan students felt that some racial discrimination and inequality still exist in our society, the racial/ethnic groups differ greatly in the strength and urgency of their conviction about this. For example, 84 percent of African American students, in contrast to only 28 percent of white students, strongly disagreed with the statement that “Most people of color are no longer discriminated against in this country.”

These group differences in the perception of societal inequality extend beyond issues that focus directly on race to more general questions about the distribution of resources and rewards in our society. Students of color, particularly African American students,

more often attribute income inequalities to societal rather than individual causes. For example, in a question addressing causes of wealth and poverty in the United States, 65 percent of African American students but only 20 percent of white students said that “failure of private industry to provide enough jobs” was a “very important” reason for “why there are poor people in the United States.”

In contrast to these striking racial/ethnic differences in students’ views of the equity of our society, the Michigan Student Study found that racial/ethnic differences were not evident in a number of arenas where prevalent stereotypes would normally predict that they would exist. Notably, the MSS data do *not* support the stereotype that underrepresented students of color, particularly African American students, do not share the core intellectual and academic values of our elite universities, and are more oriented to college for vocational and social reasons. In response to a question that asked the entering students what important experiences they hoped to have in college, African American students more often than white students chose “being a top student academically” as important, and less often chose “dating and having an active social life.” The study findings also did not support another prominent component of the stereotype that underrepresented students lack academic investment, namely, that they do not accept responsibility for their academic performance and instead avoid and externalize problems when they exist. In response to the senior survey, when compared with white students, all students of color were more, not less, self-critical of their academic effort. Their greater self-criticism existed even though they reported spending just as much time on homework. These findings suggest that students of color face special pressures to prove themselves academically and that these pressures are internalized. These and other student responses discredit the stereotype of underrepresented minority students as being antiacademic, a stereotype that has been especially insidious because it serves to devalue these students and undermine the legitimacy of their presence at universities like the University of Michigan.

The MSS findings dramatize the irony of the criticism of opponents of affirmative action that we are fostering group stereotypes through our claim that a racially/ethnically diverse student body provides a wider range of ideas and perspectives. In the years since affirmative action opened our selective universities to students of color more than a generation ago, opponents of affirmative action, not the supporters, have focused on the “differences” that these students bring to the university. They have pointed not to positive or even nonevaluative differences but to stereotypically negative differences that the MSS data simply do not substantiate. Most prominent among these “differences” is the claim that African American students are anti-intellectual and not invested academically (D’Souza 1995; McWhorter 2000), and that they do not “belong” in elite universities. It is difficult to accept the sincerity of our critics’ concern that stereotyping results from the efforts of selective universities to enroll a diverse student body when it has been the opponents of affirmative action who have advanced the most pernicious negative stereotypes of minority students.

Who cares about the impact of college on its students during the time they are in college? Are there any long-term effects of attending racially/ethnically diverse colleges and of having diversity experiences during college?

Despite the increasing centrality of college in preparing people for their various roles in society, college is still often viewed as a hiatus from the “real world,” where students and faculty are intentionally separated by their position within the ivory tower of academia. This perspective often leads people to question whether what happens to students during college will have any long-term impact since the experiences (and changes related to these experiences) may not have any applicability once students “return” to the real world.

The limited research literature that has followed college students into the postcollege world suggests that, in fact, changes during college can have a lifelong impact on the way students live their

postcollege lives. Studies such as those of the Bennington College students conducted by Newcomb and his colleagues suggest that students do in fact retain the changes that the collegiate experience has helped to create, in part due to a phenomenon of channeling, in which graduates seek out and develop postcollege environments that serve to reinforce the lessons they learned during college (Newcomb et al. 1967).

The CIRP study that formed the national component of our research provides us with the opportunity to look at whether these phenomena occur with respect to the impact of diversity. In addition to surveys of students at college entrance and four years later, the study participants were contacted again nine years after entering college. While these individuals will continue to change and develop as they grow older, this information provides important insight into whether or not collegiate changes have some permanence, while establishing the potential for long-term stability.

The pattern of results from our analyses of the nine-year data shows that the effect of college diversity experience was still statistically significant on both learning and democracy outcomes measured after students had left college. The effect of college experience with diversity was strongest on democracy outcomes. Nine years after college entry, students who had the greatest experience with diversity in college were the most likely to be engaged in volunteering in community service; to value volunteering in the community as a chance “to work with people different from me,” “to influence society as a whole,” “to improve my community,” and “to fulfill my social responsibility.” They also placed the most importance on “influencing the political structure,” “influencing social values,” “helping others in difficulty,” “being involved in programs to clean up the environment,” and “participating in a community action program” (citizenship engagement). They were the most likely to say that they had increased their “cultural awareness and appreciation” and “acceptance of persons from different races and cultures” (racial/cultural engagement). And finally they

were most likely to have diverse “current close friends,” diverse “current neighbors,” and diverse “current work associates” (living in a diverse society). Since this immediate postcollege period is critical in establishing a trajectory for the future lives of these students, we would expect the effects of college diversity on sentiments necessary for citizenship in a diverse democracy to be maintained over the long run.

The impact of diversity experience during college on the greater likelihood of having diverse friends, neighbors, and coworkers is especially noteworthy since social scientists have documented that racial isolation and segregation tend to be perpetuated over the stages of the life cycle and across institutional settings. Majority and minority individuals whose childhood experiences take place in schools and neighborhoods that are largely segregated are likely to lead their adult lives in similarly segregated occupational and residential settings (Braddock, Dawkins, and Trent 1994; Braddock and McPartland 1987; Braddock and McPartland 1988). College is a uniquely opportune time to disrupt this pattern. Moreover, we know that previously segregated minority students who attend diverse colleges and universities are the most likely to find themselves in desegregated employment and to work in professional jobs in the private sectors. Wells and Crain (1994) suggest that the networking students are able to do in diverse colleges and universities is an important explanation for later employment in racially/ethnically diverse work settings. Our findings from the national study on the impact of diversity experience in college on living in a diverse society show that at the critical time of late adolescence and early adulthood, college students have an opportunity to disrupt an insidious cycle of lifetime segregation that threatens the fabric of our pluralistic democracy.

Is it really the business of colleges and universities to prepare students to be citizens and leaders in politics, government and the military, corporations, and communities?

Some critics have argued that what we have referred to as democracy outcomes are not relevant educational goals and instead are examples of “political correctness.” As we have noted, this criticism reflects an ignorance of the centrality of such outcomes in the history of higher education in the United States.

From the founding of public higher education institutions in the first quarter of the 1800s, and certainly since the time of Thomas Jefferson, who felt that citizens must be created through education and who made the founding of the University of Virginia the primary work of his postpresidential years, a central mission of universities has been to produce educated citizens and leaders for our democracy.

Political scientist Benjamin Barber stresses that all traditional political theories—liberal, republican, and democratic—have viewed citizens as created, not born. He asks the question: “Does a university have a civic mission? Of course, for it *is* a civic mission. The cultivation of free community—of civility itself” (Barber 1998, 182).

But how does diversity foster civic preparedness? It plays a role in two critically important theories that we drew upon in the theoretical rationale laid out in the early part of this chapter: Aristotle’s theory of democracy that is built on difference rather than on similarity, and Piaget’s theory of moral development that emphasizes discussion by peers of discrepant, often conflicting, points of view. They emphasize the following conditions for democracy and moral reasoning: the presence of diverse others, who bring multiple, and sometimes conflicting, perspectives; discussion among peers who are equals; and discussion under rules of civil discourse.

These conditions are what racial/ethnic diversity brings to students at the University of Michigan, providing that administrators and faculty assure that students from different racial and ethnic backgrounds interact with each other and discuss under rules of civil discourse the many perspectives that arise from their different life experiences. Educators have an important role to play, not by telling students what to believe, as the charge of “political correct-

ness” implies, but by creating an environment where racial diversity can lead to the very conditions both Aristotle and Piaget believed were crucial for a democracy and for moral development.

Higher education must prepare students today to be leaders in an incredibly and increasingly diverse society. This is the mission of the University of Michigan both for undergraduate students and for law students. Law in particular is a public profession that is tied up with all aspects of the public world. The University of Michigan has an obligation to educate undergraduates to be citizens and leaders in the broad arenas in which they will work and live, and to train lawyers for leadership positions in both the private and public sectors.

This is exactly why a wide range and impressively large number of organizations in the United States joined together to support the university’s cases at the Supreme Court. More than seventy-five amicus briefs were submitted representing hundreds of colleges and universities; more than fifty higher education associations representing virtually every college and university in the nation; sixty-eight Fortune 500 corporations; twenty-nine former high-ranking military leaders; twenty-four U.S. states and territories; labor unions; religious organizations (including the American Jewish Committee, which was opposed to affirmative action at the time of the *Bakke* case); more than two dozen members of Congress; the major social science organizations within education, sociology, and psychology (the American Education Research Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Sociological Association); civil rights organizations (the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the National Urban League, the United Negro College Fund, and the ACLU); a dozen Native American tribes and organizations; twenty-five Asian/Pacific-American organizations; Hispanic and Latino organizations (including the New American Alliance); the National Academy of Sciences and National Academy of Engineering; twenty-eight broadcast media companies and organizations; legal organizations

and legal education groups (including the American Bar Association); more than fourteen thousand law students nationwide; and the authors of the 10 percent admissions plan in Texas.¹¹

What did all of these organizations that represented the mainstream of American institutional life have in common? All of them argued, in different ways reflecting their different institutional perspectives, that racial and ethnic diversity at the nation's most selective institutions is essential for producing members and leaders of their organizations who know how to deal with diverse constituencies and clients. They argue, further, that the health, vibrancy, and security of our democracy are at stake.

General Motors Corporation, which previously had submitted an amicus brief at the district court on behalf of the university, argues in its brief to the Supreme Court that the increasingly global and interconnected nature of the world economy and the increasingly diverse population of the United States set up a business environment that requires culturally competent business leaders.

To succeed in this increasingly diverse environment, American businesses must select leaders who possess cross-cultural competence—the capacities to interact with and to understand the experiences of, and multiplicity of perspectives held by, persons of different races, ethnicities and cultural histories. . . . Much research confirms what is intuitively obvious: students are likely to acquire greater cross-cultural competence in a multicultural and multiracial academic environment, in which students and faculty of different cultures and races interact, than they are in a homogeneous one, in which cross-cultural communication is merely a theoretical construct. (Brief of Amici Curiae General Motors Corporation at 8, *Grutter*, No. 02–241, 4)

Brief after brief submitted on behalf of the University of Michigan makes similar claims. These mainstream organizations look to higher education to prepare students to be future leaders of our

pluralistic, indeed increasingly heterogeneous, democracy and of our major economic and other societal institutions. These organizations know, as society is now constructed with widespread neighborhood and K–12 school segregation, that it is only in higher education institutions that students of all racial/ethnic backgrounds can gain the experiences and skills that are so much needed for the United States to be a viable and trusted leader nation in the world and for organizations and institutions within the United States to function effectively, competitively, and compassionately.

Conclusion

We have documented a consistent picture from both our research and the research of other scholars that shows a wide range of educational benefits when students interact and learn from each other across race and ethnicity. The amicus briefs on behalf of the plaintiffs mention only a few studies indicating possible negative effects of affirmative action, none of which focus on important educational outcomes for students. Instead, they have focused on critiquing the research conducted to support the educational benefits of diversity, though their critiques do not mention either the confirmatory research that we covered in our expert testimony or the research conducted by many others that has been brought forward since we submitted our testimony to the district court. They are silent on the impressive amount of research cited in the educational, psychological, and sociological amicus briefs supporting the benefits of racial/ethnic diversity.

Still, a question could be raised about the overwhelmingly positive picture that we have painted in this chapter. Are there no negative student reactions to the University of Michigan's emphasis on what was earlier termed the Michigan Mandate and is now thought of as simply its emphasis on diversity? Of course, some students

criticize these institutional emphases. We have already recounted that this is true, but we emphasize that the percentage of students who actually hold negative views of their *own intergroup experiences* is very small.

There are many challenges ahead. First of all, only about 50 to 60 percent of the students had the classroom and informal interactions with diverse peers that we have shown produced positive student outcomes. It is possible—indeed easy—for students to remain in homogeneous groupings on the campus, often replicating their home environments in fraternities and sororities and in other social settings. When students stay in what they call their “comfort zones,” they are shortchanging what a Michigan education can offer to them. But to fully maximize the potential of a diverse student body, the University of Michigan must continue to offer curricular and cocurricular opportunities for students to interact with each other, and especially to interact over a sustained period of time in environments that foster the personal, sharing relationships that account for positive outcomes for students. The residence halls, in particular, should be such settings, since nearly all incoming first-year students live in the residence halls.

For most of Michigan’s students, its residence halls are the most diverse environments they have ever encountered. Students live with each other over an extended time. Rooming with a student from a different racial/ethnic background, though sometimes a genuine challenge for these previously racially segregated students, is potentially a very positive experience. We have seen from the experiment conducted by Duncan and colleagues (2003) that cross-racial roommate experiences had important benefits for students. Universities also need to enhance the capacities of faculty who are interested in using student diversity for maximal learning. Such faculty benefit from support and opportunities to share best practices and ways of handling problems that inevitably arise when different, even conflicting, perspectives and emotion are allowed,

indeed encouraged, in classroom discussion. Programs, such as the Program on Intergroup Relations, that provide safe places for students to “go beyond their comfort zones”—taking risks to deal with the difficult issue of race in America—need to be sustained and promoted. This specific program has in fact been adopted at numerous universities around the country. These educational opportunities, and many more, must be nourished *and* evaluated.

Second, the University of Michigan faces complexities in how various groups of students interpret the meaning of diversity and multicultural education. For students of color the university’s commitment to diversity not only provides the opportunity to interact with and learn from students of other backgrounds and cultures but also gives legitimacy to the unique experiences and cultural contributions of their own groups. Until recently these experiences and contributions have been mostly excluded from the intellectual and social life of our college campuses. Students of color, particularly African American students, have responded to this recognition of the uniqueness of different group experiences in two ways: learning more about their own groups’ histories and their own identities, and learning more about other groups. This is also true of white students, but many fewer of them than seniors of color, especially African American seniors, say that they “gained a greater commitment to their racial/ethnic group since coming to the University,” and that they “gained greater knowledge of their groups’ contributions to American society.” For white students the university’s commitment to diversity brings more ambivalent reactions. While most white students support the principles of cultural pluralism and have reacted positively to their own diversity experiences at Michigan, many of them are also concerned that too much focus on group differences may constrain the ability of white students and students of color to relate to each other “as individuals.” Three times as many white seniors as African American seniors, for example, agreed that “the University’s focus on diversity puts too

much emphasis on differences.” These reactions reflect the complexity of simultaneously acknowledging the existence of groups *and* individuals that is central to the national debate on diversity. A related aspect of this complexity comes from the great intergroup differences the Michigan Student Study has documented, particularly between African American and white students, on questions that tap students’ views of racial discrimination and racial justice, as well as their ideas about what should be done about these issues. These differences mirror equally large differences between whites and African Americans in national surveys of the adult population in the United States (Bobo 2001). We have stressed that these different perspectives on the fault line of race in America are a critical aspect of the value of diversity and an impetus for growth in understanding and self-exploration. But they can also create barriers to intergroup communication unless exploration of differences is conducted under clear rules of civil discourse. While complex, this university and other universities must continually offer students such a civil society—safe places for genuine discussion and sharing of personal experiences across race—in which they can grapple with the contested meanings of diversity, democracy, equity, justice, difference and commonality, and community. Anything less fails to use the institutional resource that a diverse student body represents.

Third, as the University of Michigan looks to the future, a major recommendation to create greater public understanding and support for affirmative action made by Faye Crosby (2004) is of the utmost importance. The university must engage with its various constituencies about diversity and affirmative action. In the early days of using race-conscious policies in admission before the onset of the litigation, the university may not have provided sufficient information to the student body and to the wider public about the qualifications of the students of color who are admitted to the university. We perhaps erred in not explaining to more potentially

interested audiences how affirmative action actually worked at the University of Michigan or why it benefited all students by assuring a diverse study body in its undergraduate and graduate schools. In hindsight we perhaps unwittingly fostered an invalid suspicion of our admission policies. Although suspicion and resentment are problems that the Supreme Court decision may have somewhat ameliorated, we must continue to be mindful of the importance of helping our students, faculty, staff, and the wider public understand what our new undergraduate policy is, how it assures admitting absolutely qualified students, how it addresses the guidance of the Supreme Court, and why affirmative action continues to be necessary into the foreseeable future to assure racial and ethnic diversity at the University of Michigan.

Finally, we reflect back on the journey that we took in providing a rationale for the educational value of diversity, using data available to us in 1998, and examining the research of other scholars that had been published at that time. The critical question for us then and now is the impact of social science research on the Court. Did our research and the research of other social scientists, summarized by various amicus briefs on behalf of the University of Michigan, have a significant impact on the Court? The answer to that question, of course, lies in the deliberations within the Court about which we can only guess. We believe that Michigan's defense of its admission policies to achieve racial/ethnic diversity was greatly strengthened by social science evidence. All of the court cases involving affirmative action in higher education previously had depended nearly exclusively on anecdotal evidence. We also believe that Michigan's defense was enormously enhanced by the arguments brought forward by the large number of mainstream organizations and institutions as amici curiae for the university. Their arguments were fashioned both from their own experiences and from the student outcomes that we and others had delineated as the consequences of having curricular and cocurricular experiences

with diversity. The synergy between the research and these multiple arguments made by corporations, the military, higher education, labor unions, and many other organizations clearly helped what was already a strong defense put together by the university and its lawyers. As we look back, we feel honored and gratified to have been part of the process.

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