

Position of The University Of Houston System Board Of Regents  
Regarding The U.S. Supreme Court Ruling  
On The Use Of Race And Ethnicity In Student Admission

**Background**

This summer the U.S. Supreme Court issued *Grutter v. Bollinger* which provided guidelines for considering race and ethnicity among other factors in admission to institutions of higher education. These guidelines focus on admission procedures which use individualized, holistic candidate reviews and which ensure that race and ethnicity, if considered, are valued flexibly as a “plus” factor for each applicant. These types of admission policies must then be regularly evaluated. The court concluded that student body diversity is a compelling state interest that can justify the use of race of admission.

**Policy Statement**

The University of Houston System Board of Regents recognizes and endorses the benefits of diversity in the university setting, for the purpose of breaking down stereotypes and promoting cross-racial understanding. Therefore, to the extent necessary to achieve a diverse student body, and after race neutral alternatives have proven unsuccessful, we believe each component institution should have the discretion to adopt admission policies which consider the totality of each individual applicant’s background and strengths, including but not limited to cultural history ethnic origin, race, hardships overcome, service to others, extra curricular activities, grades, test scores and work experience. Further, an applicant’s background, including race and ethnicity, should be an allowable but not determinative consideration in awarding some discretionary scholarships.

**Process**

Any UHS university or academic unit that proposes such an admission plan (or scholarship program) shall do so based on the guidelines set forth by the Supreme Court. The Chancellor has delegated approval of these plans to the Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs in conjunction with the Office of General Counsel. Due to state law any changes in admission policies shall be published at least one year in advance of consideration of the application. Based on this requirement, the inclusion of race and ethnicity factors in admission cannot become effective until one year after the publication of the approved admission policy. The position statement expressed herein shall be reviewed by the Board of Regents within five years from adoption.