



The Access and Diversity Collaborative: Policy Leadership and Institutional Support for the "Second Decade"

June 4, 2013

An Invitation to Affiliate with the ADC as an Institutional Sponsor

With background on and a forecast of the vital work ahead regarding the issues of access and diversity associated with college and university enrollment, this ADC sponsorship invitation explains the opportunity and benefits associated with becoming an ADC Sponsor.

Background and History: An Overview

A decade has passed since the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decisions in *Grutter* and *Gratz*, the two landmark cases that addressed the lawfulness of race-conscious admissions in higher education. Shortly after those decisions, the Access and Diversity Collaborative [ADC] was launched—giving rise to the College Board's work with core partners to provide sustained support for institutions of higher education [IHEs] and national education organizations committed to achieving access and diversity goals inextricably linked with career and citizenship readiness in the 21st Century.

With a remarkable breadth and depth in the delivery of high quality support,¹ the ADC has in its first decade addressed the full panoply of enrollment-related issues, with wide ranging guidance (from in depth "how to" manuals to policy white papers) and convenings (from "brain trusts" of experts to widely attended two-day workshops...and everything in between). More specifically, while pursuing its ambitious (and evolving) agenda, the ADC remained true to its core aim of providing pragmatic institutional and broad policy support grounded in research and experience by:

1. Responding to the priorities of IHEs and education leaders as it has framed a well-grounded vision, facilitated robust conversations, and fostered enhanced understanding of the complex issues that institutions and national organizations said were important to them in pursuit of their educationally sound, legally sustainable access and diversity policies and practices;
2. Addressing a series of complex issues with a multidisciplinary focus—bringing together experts in strategy, law, policy, practice, research, and communications as a foundation for thoughtful

¹ See, e.g., *The Access and Diversity Collaborative: A Six-Year Retrospective* (October, 2010) (reflecting institutional evaluations and testimonials) at <http://diversitycollaborative.collegeboard.org/resources/document-library>; and more generally, please visit <http://diversitycollaborative.collegeboard.org>.

3. deliberation and (in the words of Mr. Justice Powell in *Bakke*) engaging in the "robust exchange of ideas;"² and
4. Offering research- and practice-based pragmatic solutions, distilling complex substantive issues based on deep research and analysis, and mapping them around process and stakeholder engagement strategies and next steps (a familiar refrain: "what do I do tomorrow?").

In the end, through a robust combination of resources and services, and with the leadership and active participation of institutional and organizational partners, the ADC led the field in framing the evolving policy and practice issues of the day, addressing the "real world" questions facing colleges and universities, and forging a national dialogue that helped guide decision-making across the board. Amidst an ever-changing educational and legal landscape in the decade following *Grutter* and *Gratz*, lessons were learned, policies were crafted, and hard questions were tackled. But, our work is far from over.

The Next Pivot Point: *Fisher*

All eyes are again on the U.S. Supreme Court, with (as of the distribution of this invitation) its anticipated decision in *Fisher v. University of Texas*, which is expected to address key questions regarding the circumstances in which race and ethnicity may continue to be factors in higher education admission decisions designed to promote institutional diversity goals.³ While directly addressing but one field of relevance (law) and one point of focus in the diversity context (race/ethnicity), the potential implications of the Court's actions are much broader. *Fisher* is significant given its potential impact on the current legal, policy, and practice landscape affecting race-/ethnicity-conscious enrollment practices—and, by extension, with respect to other facets of diversity (including race-neutral practices such as socio-economic status, "distance travelled," and more) that are commonly reflective of IHE missions and goals. In addition, while technically addressing only a question of admissions, the legal principles enunciated by the Court may reach more broadly, to include recruitment, outreach, retention, financial aid, scholarships, and more.⁴ And, to continue a theme from the first decade of the ADC's work, the implications from this "Court of law" extend in significant ways to the "court of public opinion," which affects every institution seeking to lead on these critical issues.

² See, e.g., *The Access and Diversity Collaborative: A Six-Year Retrospective* (October, 2010) (listing over a dozen Collaborative faculty and leaders in the development of ADC resources) at <http://diversitycollaborative.collegeboard.org/resources/document-library>

³ See Legal Update: *Fisher v. University of Texas* Case Summary; and Preparing for the Fisher Decision: Are you Ready, both at <http://diversitycollaborative.collegeboard.org>.

⁴ Despite the limited focus of the *Fisher* case—higher education admissions—the impact of the Court's ruling is almost certain to extend to other realms of institutional practice, as past U.S. Department of Justice and Department of Education policies and written guidance (and prior Collaborative publications) have illustrated. See e.g., Guidance on the Voluntary Use Of Race To Achieve Diversity in Postsecondary Education (U.S. Depts. of Justice and Education, 2012).

In sum, the period of time following the Court's decision is expected to generate as many questions and answers, with profound consequences for education leaders. And, to be clear, while the question of "what is legal" is going to be the question of the day (for many days), the work envisioned by the Collaborative will extend more broadly to address the educational, as well as legal, developments of consequence in research, policy and practice that should be guiding the work of IHEs and relevant organizations. In short, the Collaborative will continue its tradition of addressing and leading on the relevant mix of "real world" issues affecting institutional and organizational leaders that implicate enrollment-related policy, practice and action, even as new issues emerge on multiple fronts.

To enhance the educational experience and outcomes for *all* students attending postsecondary institutions where expanding pathways of access is key and the educational benefits of diversity are mission-central, the College Board *would like for you to join and help lead our effort.*

Building on Strong Foundations: New Horizons

Reflecting its own evolution and maturation over the course of the past decade, the Collaborative's overarching goals moving forward are expected to center on:

[1] providing national organizations and IHEs a vital, grounded national voice of support for the continuation of robust, research/practice-based, and lawful access *and* diversity policies; and

[2] in corresponding fashion, directly and efficiently supporting institutional policy development and practice efforts promoting the expansion of pathways and more robust opportunities for historically underserved youth (including low-income and disadvantaged youth, more generally) to achieve their postsecondary goals.

With the ultimate goal of enhancing the educational experience and outcomes for *all* students attending postsecondary institutions where expanding pathways of access is key and the educational benefits of diversity are mission-central, the College Board is poised to expand its collaboration with its members, its sister organizations, and education leaders who share a common but yet unrealized vision. *We would like for you to join, and help lead our effort.*

Building on the foundations established in the first decade of our work, we can, together, establish:

1. Clear and coherent vision and policy platform, appropriate for the next decade (and more) of policy leadership and advocacy;
2. Sophisticated policy and practice guidance for institutions and organizations to support their mission-based goals, reflective of underlying legal, policy, and research analysis; and
3. Thought leadership and coherence in policy and practice development principally associated with:

- The effective use of data and support for/integration of research within the policy realm (nationally and as a matter of institutional policy);
- The identification and development of replicable best practices (that, among other things, comport with the *Fisher* decision); and
- The facilitation/mitigation of polarizing positions (and research) in pursuit of an articulation of principled and meaningful common ground and practical directions.

Joining the Team: Sponsorship Opportunities for You

To help make this vision a reality in a time of a renewed focus on preparing students for the workforce and citizenship in a rapidly changing world, the ADC will need your voice, your support, and your leadership. **To help support the ongoing work of the ADC (along with contributions from The College Board, EducationCounsel, LLC, and supporting philanthropies), colleges and universities (for an annual fee of \$5,000) and national/regional organizations (for an annual fee of \$7,500) may fully participate in an array of activities and receive sponsor-only benefits.⁵ Specifically, institutional and organizational sponsors will:**

- ✓ **Have the opportunity to help shape ADC priorities and provide advice and direction regarding ADC activities, including attendance at two annual ADC sponsor convenings;**
- ✓ **Receive regular, web-based updates of relevant policy, legal, and research developments, including access to a sponsors-only web portal/site, participation in sponsor-only webcasts and access to sponsor-only podcasts;**
- ✓ **Be eligible for discounts on selected College Board services and products (e.g., two-for-one registrations for all seminars (for each paid registration, you will receive one complimentary registration; and**
- ✓ **Be recognized as sponsors on the ADC website and in other relevant College Board program materials, including and the College Board's annual FORUM and Colloquium promotional materials.**

The original Access & Diversity Collaborative membership made a similar commitment in 2004 which facilitated a rapid response to the Michigan decisions and guaranteed a successful ongoing effort on behalf of all higher education institutions. As in the past, many of the products and services will be made available to all in the education community at no charge (including publications such as manuals, guides, white papers; and participation in selected webinars). But, given the enhanced need for focused collaboration by leaders in the field, these (and other) sponsor-only opportunities and benefits will be provided to sponsors, exclusively. For more information please feel free to contact Brad Quin at bquin@collegeboard.org, 571-485-3438. **A simple e-mail indication of your willingness to join this effort as a sponsor would be all that is required now. Please respond no later than July 1, 2013.**

⁵ As in the past, national organizations that are limited to participation as supporting organizations based on their existing rules and protocols may similarly participate. Details of such affiliation will be determined on an organization-specific basis.